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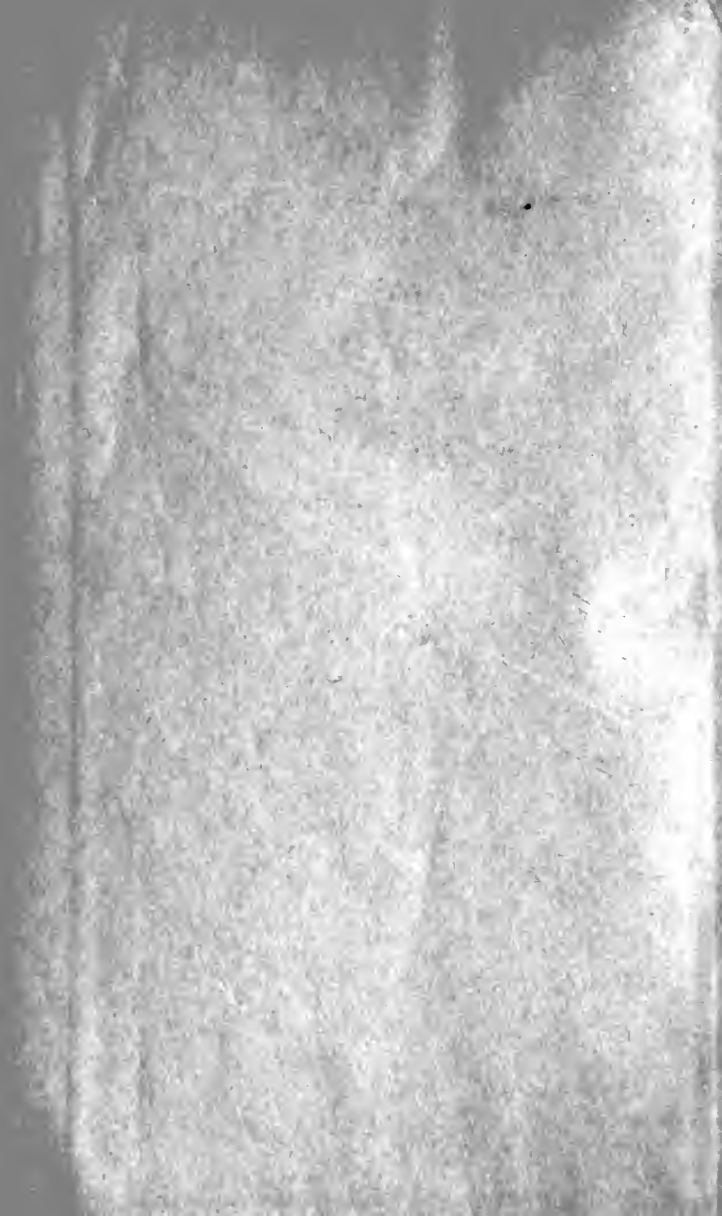
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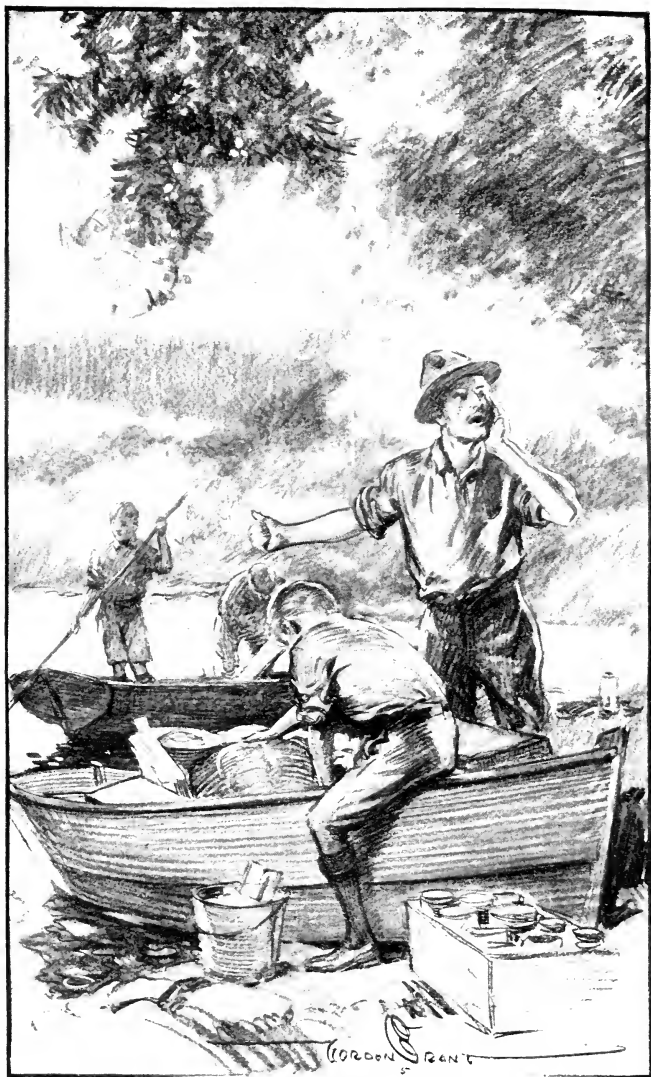
Burton

Camp Bob's hill





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WE CARRIED OUR STUFF TO THE WATER AND PUT IT IN A COUPLE
OF ROW-BOATS [P. 27]

CAMP BOB'S HILL

BY

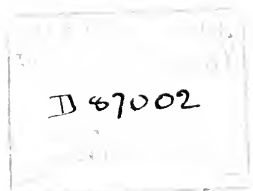
CHARLES PIERCE BURTON

AUTHOR OF "THE BOYS OF BOB'S HILL," "THE BOY SCOUTS OF BOB'S
HILL," ETC.

With Illustrations by
GORDON GRANT



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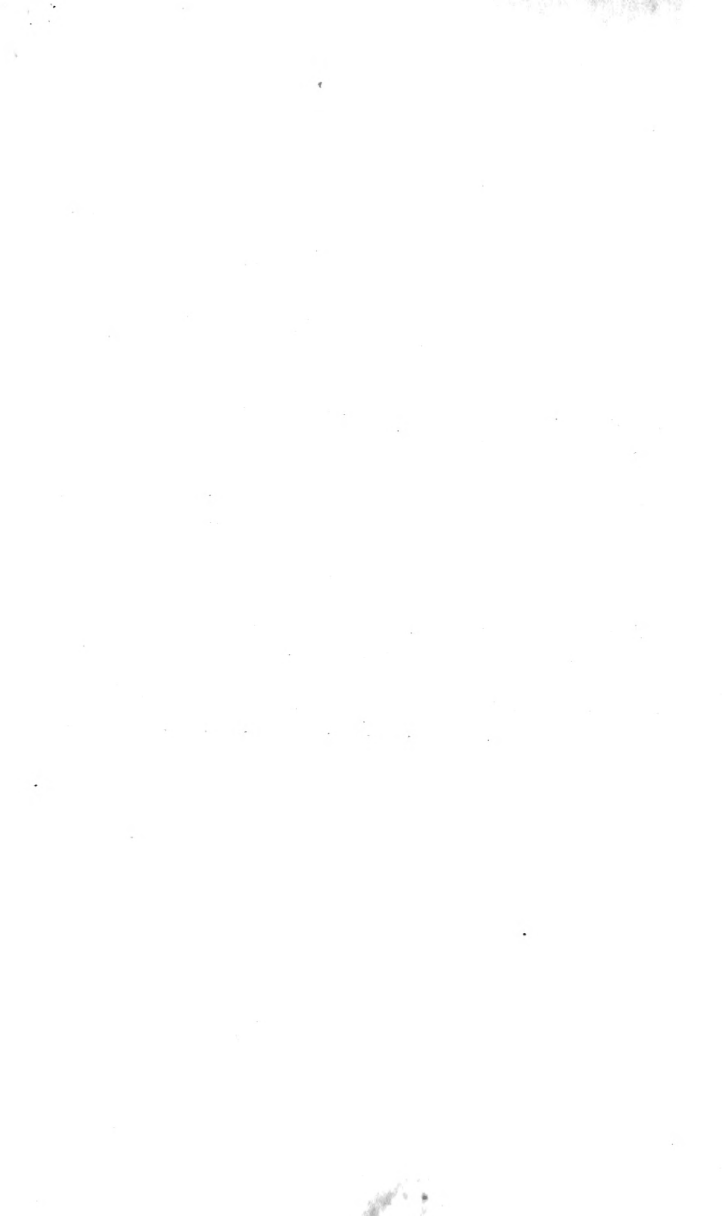
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CAMP BOB'S HILL

CHAPTER I

SKINNY GETS A LETTER

IF you will take a map of Massachusetts, which, you know, is a part of the United States of America, and look up in the northwest corner, you will find some funny-looking black marks and the word "Greylock." Greylock is a mountain, and a mountain is a high elevation of land. My geography says so.

Skinny says that the marks look more like our cave than they do like a mountain, and that is what we all think, but I suppose it is the best that the geography folks can do.

Anyhow, Greylock is the highest mountain in Massachusetts, which, if you don't know, the teacher ought to make you stay after school.

That is where this history begins,—not on top of Greylock, but at the bottom of one of its foot-

hills, which we call Bob's Hill—with me, John Alexander Smith, hoeing in our garden one Saturday morning toward the last of May, wishing vacation time would hurry along or, anyhow, that some of the boys would show up.

I was just resting and looking at a window in the upper part of our barn. There was only one whole pane of glass left in the window and I was wondering if I could hit that one with a stone, when I heard an awful yell.

Then a voice shouted, "Charge, my braves. Eat 'em alive," and before I could have said Jack Robinson more than three times, the whole Band swarmed over the fence, from Phillips's driveway, into the garden.

"You'd better be careful, Skinny Miller," I said, "how you go charging over those peas and beans, or there'll be something doing. My mother'll charge you all right, that's what she will."

But, just the same, they surrounded me and marched me into the house where Ma was looking out of the kitchen window to see what all the noise was about.

"Mrs. Smith," said Skinny, as bold as anything, "the Band is going to have a meeting at the cave right away and Pedro being secretary, we need him to write up the doings."

"I'll finish hoeing to-night," I told her. "I'm 'most through, anyway. It'll be cooler then, too."

"Is this to be a meeting of bandits or Indians or Boy Scouts?" she asked, trying to look very sober, but I could see a twinkle in her eyes. "Because," she went on, "if it is Boy Scouts, I have just fried a batch of doughnuts, but I don't suppose Indians or bandits care about such things."

We all gave a yell at that. Then Skinny held up one hand and we stopped to hear what he had to say.

"Fellers," said he, "when it comes to Pedro's mother's doughnuts, there ain't any difference between being Boy Scouts, bandits, or Injuns. We're good for two apiece any day of the week."

Then he folded his arms like a bandit and looked around fierce. "*Are* we, or ain't we?" said he.

"We are," we all shouted in chorus, except Bill Wilson. Bill yelled, "Betcher life!" so loud that

Ma covered her ears and made believe she was scared.

Then she gave us the doughnuts in a paper bag and told us to clear out. It did not take us long. In less than a minute we were climbing up through Blackinton's orchard, along a path which winds among the trees. Beyond the orchard, Bob's Hill is so steep that we didn't stop to climb straight up, but took a sort of road that leads around and up on the other side. We usually dig our shoes in and climb straight up, partly for the fun of doing it and partly because from the top we can see all up and down the valley, the village below, and East Mountain opposite. It's great.

This time we took the easier way and soon were beyond the top and hurrying toward our cave.

Straight ahead was old Greylock, smiling down at us in the sunshine and looking so fine that we gave a cheer. Between, green fields sloped gradually up to the woods on the mountain-side, where we knew that a mountain brook was tumbling over the rocks in a splendid waterfall, then dashing down past our cave.

There are eight of us and sometimes we are bandits, sometimes Indians, and sometimes Boy Scouts, just as Ma said, though mostly we are Scouts because we like to wear uniforms, rescue people, and all that sort of thing. No matter which we are, I am secretary and have to put all the doings in the minutes of the meetings.

Our patrol leader is Skinny Miller. His front name is Gabriel, only he does not use it any, except sometimes, when we are bandits, he calls himself Gabe. When he does that, he is something fierce.

The summer before this history begins, Mr. Norton, our Scoutmaster, had got us to join the Boy Scouts and the Band became Raven Patrol. Then the Gingham Ground Gang joined as Eagle Patrol, and there we were all tied up together so that we couldn't fight any more, because Boy Scouts only can fight the enemy.

The map doesn't say anything about them, but we think more of Peck's Falls than of all the rest of the geography except Bunker Hill Monument, where some of Skinny's ancestors fell. He thinks a lot of Bunker Hill Monument. You see, our cave

is in Peck's Falls woods, where we can hear the roar of the falls and, when we look out, can see the clear mountain water tumbling between rocks.

When you want to walk up to Peck's Falls, you can go the longer way around, past the old Quaker Meeting House, then south on the west road until you come opposite the woods; or you can go straight back from Park Street, through Phillips's or Blackinton's orchard, and over the hill and across, until you come out on the west road, opposite the falls. Then you walk up a road that comes down the mountain-side, until you see two red houses standing close together on the right-hand side.

That isn't the place; but watch, and when the folks are not looking, go between those houses and squeeze through the bars: then follow along a stream until you come to a barb-wire fence on the edge of the woods. The Band knows where there is a hole in that fence with a tiny path on the other side, leading through a tangle of blackberry bushes and underbrush. It winds among the trees, the roar of falling water growing louder and louder all the time, until, after a few minutes, you come out

all of a sudden into an open space and see the falls, with Pulpit Rock reaching across in front.

If it doesn't make you dizzy, you can edge your way carefully along the narrow rocky ledge, until you are in front of the falls, leaning back against the rock for all you are worth and almost holding your breath. For it is fifty feet or more, straight down to a shallow pool of clear water and a rushing stream, and from the woods far above, a mountain brook leaps and tumbles from rock to rock, now out of sight behind some ledge, then dancing and foaming in the sunshine, but all the time laughing and singing, until it falls with a roar into the pool below.

Say, when Benny jumped off the end of Pulpit Rock, with the tramp chasing—but I have told all about that once in the doings of the Band.

"Fellers," said Skinny, after we had watched the falls as long as we wanted to and then had made our way back off the rock, "the hour has struck. To the cave, and mum's the word!"

We made our way down the steep side of the ravine, following a narrow path, until we came to

the level of the brook below the falls. In front of us, on the edge of the water, was a big rock sticking out of the ground, with a tree growing from the top.

Skinny looked up and down to see if all was clear.

"Bill," said he, "you guard the path and let no one come up without the countersign."

"Without the which?"

"Without the password."

"What is the password?" asked Bill.

But Skinny was inside the cave by that time and did not hear. It was a good thing for Bill, too, because it makes Skinny mad to have us ask questions.

Bill came in last and we all sat there on the sandy floor of the cave, waiting to find out about the meeting.

"Pedro—I mean the secretary will call the roll," said Skinny.

"Skinny," I called, "Bill, Hank, Benny, Chuck, Harry, Wally."

"We are all here," I told him, "counting me."

"Fellers," said Skinny, "I don't know whether we are Scouts or bandits or Injuns, but we want to have some fun as soon as school lets out, whatever we are."

"You bet!" we yelled.

"Pedro, you are secretary. There can't anybody read your writin', but we can hear and you can tell us about the doings of the Band."

"I guess everybody here knows about them already," I said. "We were it."

He stood up, until his head nearly reached the top of the cave, folded his arms, and looked fierce.

"Am I leader of this patrol, or ain't I?" said he.

"You're leader, all right, but you're crazy with the heat," I told him.

"Shut up, Pedro, can't you?" said Bill. "We want to hear about our deeds. They listen good."

So I had to do it.

"A long time ago," I began, "about three years, I guess, Tom Chapin found this 'ere cave, and we formed a band of bandits, with Tom as captain. We had all kinds of fun that summer and Tom got chased by a bull, when he tried to paralyze it

by the power of the human eye, like the school reader says, and we got lost on Greylock, and we found some hidden treasure."

"Put in about licking the Gingham Ground Gang," said Bill, when I stopped to get my breath.

"Skinny, I mean Mr. President," said Benny Wade, "we licked 'em all right, but they are Scouts now, so that doesn't count."

"Skip the fightin' part," said Skinny. "But, just the same, we can lick 'em again any day of the week and don'tcher forget it."

He swung his arms fierce and you couldn't hear anything for a while after that. Then I went on:

"When Tom went away to school with the money which we had found, Skinny became captain and he is a good one. We built a dam to get the flood out of our cave and we smoked out a tramp."

"We could have drowned him out," said Bill. "Only we didn't want to spoil the dam."

"And the next summer some of us went out to Ralph Baxter's in Illinois, and went down the river in a boat and camped out at Starved Rock, on Illinois River. Hank found a pearl in a clam shell

and Skinny lassoed a robber who tried to steal it. Last summer we joined the Boy Scouts and Mr. Norton, our Scoutmaster, took us on a hike over Florida Mountain, as far as Connecticut River.

"And now," I went on, sitting down, "it's 'most vacation time again and we want to have some more fun before we get so old that we can't. I'm going on fourteen, already."

"Now you've said something, Pedro," called out Benny. "I'm 'most twelve and I can remember when I was only nine."

"Oh, shucks!" said Skinny. "Who cares about gettin' old? Now, listen, and mum's the word!"

With that he pulled a letter out of his pocket and opened it slowly to give us time to be surprised.

"Do you remember I told you about my cousin Dick out in Indiana? Here is what he says, or part of it:

"VALPARAISO, IND., May 26.

"DEAR SKINNY:

"I have got a scheme better than any stunt you ever pulled off. Bring the Band out here this summer. We have all kinds of little lakes around here and I know where I can get some tents. We'll

camp out on one of the lakes and have the time of our lives. They are trying to organize some Boy Scouts here and your coming will help it along and that is good Scout work, ain't it?

"It needn't cost so much. There will be cheap rates to Chicago and we can earn a lot of money picking huckleberries. There is a big huckleberry marsh near one of the lakes and when the berries are ripe they want all the pickers they can get. We can earn enough to take care of all the expenses of the camp and then some.

"What do you say?

"Your cousin,

"DICK."

"P.S.—Alice Laurence's mother, the girl you saved when she fell over the edge of the canyon at Starved Rock, has rented a cottage on one of the lakes for the summer."

We didn't say a word when Skinny had finished reading, except Bill, and he didn't say anything, but he stood on his hands and played a tune with his feet against the roof of the cave where it sloped down, and we knew what he meant.

"It's a good scheme," I said. "Only our folks may not let us do it. It's 'most as far as we went before."

"Everybody that wants to do it, holler," said Skinny.

An awful roar went out the hole that leads into the cave and floated down through the ravine.

"Let's earn money, Saturdays," said Hank, "until it's time to go. We can mow lawns and hoe gardens and do all kinds of things."

We all gave a groan at that, but it seemed the best way and that is what we decided to do; but first we had to find out if our folks would let us go.

Sunday afternoon, I heard a whistle out in front of the house and when I went out, I found Skinny looking as if he had lost his best fish pole.

"They won't let me do it," said he, as soon as he saw me coming.

"Same here," I told him.

"Folks are always thinking that a boy is going to get into trouble. Why, look at the Band. Nothing ever happened to us—nothing much, I mean. We never got killed yet nor drowned."

"I asked Pa to go with us, if he was afraid to let us go alone."

"Good for you! What did he say?"

"He said he'd like to go, all right, and if we would camp out in the back yard, he'd do it."

"I wish Mr. Norton would go."

"Let's ask him. He's got to go somewhere, hasn't he? Everybody goes on a vacation, and he said last summer that maybe he'd take our whole troop out this year."

"We don't want the whole troop. They couldn't all go, anyhow. I don't believe he'd go so far."

"Well, he told us to go to him with our troubles, and this is trouble, all right."

"There he comes now," shouted Skinny, and, sure enough, there was Mr. Norton, our Scoutmaster, coming down Park Street, as big as life. We both made a run for him, hardly stopping to give the Scout salute.

"What's this? Am I being surrounded?" he asked, laughing.

"You can't go until you promise to do it," said Skinny. "Will you promise?"

"Being in something of a hurry, I guess I'll have to promise," said he, with his eyes twinkling. "When do we start?"

"How did you know about it?" we asked him.

"I only judged by the symptoms. It's almost vacation time and that's the open season for Scouts."

Then we told him about Dick's letter and how our folks didn't want us to camp out on any lake alone. You see, we were not used to lakes, all we had being Hoosac River, which you can wade across in some places in summer.

"I'll tell you what," said he, after thinking it over, both of us watching him anxiously. "This is a matter that cannot be decided offhand. It is different from a trip to Peck's Falls, or even from a hike over the mountain. Let's leave it in this way: You find out what it will cost and whether your folks will let you go if I go along to look after you, and find out how many of you can go. We'll have a meeting of the patrol at my house next Saturday night. It happens that I am expecting a letter from Chicago any day now and if it says what I think it will say, I shall have to go out there this summer, anyhow. I must hurry along now. Don't forget Saturday night."

Forget it! We didn't think or talk of anything else all the week. Just as soon as my folks heard that Mr. Norton might go along, they gave in right away.

"It's kind of expensive, but we'll call it a part of your education," said Pa, "and charge it up to profit and loss. That trip last summer with Mr. Norton was a great thing for you, John, and I must say that you have been a different boy since you joined the Scouts."

When Saturday night came, it was an excited bunch of Scouts that rang the bell at Mr. Norton's house. He opened the door and stood there, smiling down at us; then motioned for us to go in.

"Now, boys," said he, when we all had sat down, "which shall it be first, business or pleasure? Mrs. Norton is trying to keep two quarts of ice cream from melting. How about it, Captain?"

"Why can't we do both? We want to know about the trip and it wouldn't be right to let that ice cream melt."

Before Mr. Norton could answer Mrs. Norton came in with a tray full of dishes, heaped up with

ice cream, and that settled it. I have noticed that's the way Ma settles things at our house. She doesn't talk about them; she just does them.

We didn't talk much of any for a few moments; then Mr. Norton stopped long enough to say, "Well, boys, it is settled so far as I am concerned. I'll have to go to Chicago whether you do or not. I could run in to the city from the camp very easily, as often as my business made it necessary. How about you?"

"I can go," I told him. Skinny said that he could and, one after the other, all the boys said the same except Hank Bates. He sat there, quiet, with his face kind of working, as if he was trying to keep from crying. I knew what the trouble was, for he had told me.

"How about you, Hank?"

"I can't go," said he, wiping his eyes and pretending it was sweat. "The folks said they would like to have me be with you, but it is going to cost too much money. Father has been sick, you know."

"I wish your father could go with us," Mr. Nor-

ton told him. "It would do him a world of good, but I suppose that is out of the question."

He waited for a moment, then went on, "Isn't it fortunate how things happen sometimes? I need someone to help me before I go and after I get back. It will take quite a bit of your time, but it will be worth the price of a round-trip ticket to me. What do you say, will you help me out?"

Hank got up with a funny look on his face, gave the Scout salute, and then started for the door.

"I must be going now," said he, with a queer little quiver in his voice. "I want to tell the folks." In another second he was going down the street on a run.

That is how I came to be writing this history and that is how eight bandits, Injuns, or Scouts, from the northwest corner of Massachusetts, came to be camping out on Long Lake, near the northwest corner of Indiana.

CHAPTER II

OFF FOR LONG LAKE

THERE are more lakes around Valparaiso than you could shake a stick at. Not that you would want to shake a stick at any of them except, of course, a fish pole. We shook a lot of those.

Dick met us at the depot one forenoon late in June. We thought it would paralyze the natives, when we piled off the train, yelling like Indians, Bill Wilson doing his best, but they never noticed it. You see, they have a college there, or something, and are used to such things.

It was just as Dick said. There are all kinds of lakes around Valparaiso. They are small lakes, except Lake Michigan, which is about fifteen miles away. That seems like the ocean, it is so big. The others are smaller and that is what Mr. Norton likes about them.

"The beauty of a lake," he explained, "lies largely in its shore line, because water looks much the same everywhere. When the shores are so far away that you can't see them plain, the lake isn't half as pretty as when you can look across and get on to its curves."

Anyhow, these lakes are pretty, as you will find out for yourself if you ever go there. First, there is Sager's Lake on the south edge of the city. That is almost as pretty as Peck's Falls. A small stream has been dammed and the water has filled a little valley, between two wooded bluffs.

Then, beginning about three and one-half miles north of the city, there is a whole string of lakes. Flint, Long, and Canada open into each other. Wahob comes pretty near opening into the others, only it doesn't, and there are a whole lot of little ones, which don't open into anything. We didn't find out about them all at once. Whenever we'd think we had found them all, we would go out on a hike some day and discover another.

We had taken a train that would land us in Valparaiso in the forenoon in order to have

plenty of time to get our camp ready before dark.

"We don't want any hotel bills, if we can help it," Mr. Norton told us, "although there are a number of hotels on the lake, I understand, where we can put up if necessary."

"Hotel nothin'!" said Skinny. "What's the matter with sleeping on the ground and looking up at the stars and things? The Band didn't have any hotel or tent, I guess, or anything but bushes, that time we camped out at the old mill on Fox River, and we didn't have any hotel when we did the hike stunt to get a First-class Scout's badge."

"You slept in a barn," Bill told him, "that's what you did, and hay is different from bare ground, and a lady gave you your breakfast in the house."

That was so. Skinny did sleep in a barn and he worked for a farmer's wife enough to pay for his breakfast. The rest of us didn't find any barn and we slept out of doors and cooked our own breakfast, which was great fun, only scary.

"Aw, g'wan!" said Skinny, "what if I did?"

There is nothing in Scout law against sleeping in a barn, is there? I lassoed a bear on the way back, didn't I? How many of you fellers dast lasso a bear?"

"You were up in a tree, though, and didn't dast come down."

"It looks some like a storm," said Mr. Norton, winking at me. "Bill, suppose you look for a wagon to carry our stuff in."

"I guess you won't go to any hotel when I'm around," Dick told us. "Only you'll have to sleep on the floor at our house, because we haven't beds enough for so many. You are to come up to the house for dinner, anyhow. The folks said so. There is an electric railway to the lakes. Bill, tell the man to take your trunks and things to the station and the car will drop them off near where we are going to camp."

"That is a good plan," said Mr. Norton, "and dinner will taste good. Now, if Dick will tell me where to go, I'll order some supplies and have them sent on in advance with the rest of the things. We found out last summer that boys on camping trips

develop some wonderful appetites. I'll pay for the things myself, for I presume you boys are pretty near 'broke,' but I shall expect each of you to pay me back for your share, either when you get to picking berries, or after you reach home."

He was right, too. I mean about the being broke part. I only had a few dollars left, and the other boys were the same.

"I think it would be well to go over to the Court House," said he, afterward, "and see about a fishing license. I understand that a license fee is charged for fishing in the lakes."

"I ain't going to pay anything just for catching a few fish in a lake," said Skinny. "This is a free country, I guess."

We all thought the same about it, but Mr. Norton told us that if we were going to fish we would have to take out a license. "I think you will want to do some fishing," said he, "before the summer is over. One of the first lessons a Scout should learn, is that laws should be obeyed. This is a free country, in one sense, as Skinny says, but that doesn't mean that everybody can do just as he pleases, re-

gardless of law. What is law? Can anybody tell me?"

"Law is the things you can't do," Bill told him.

"Well, not altogether that. It is the thing you can do, sometimes. This country is governed by the people, isn't it? Well, law is the will of the people. The people of Indiana have said that a fishing license of one dollar must be paid except by those living in this or the adjoining counties. We live in Massachusetts and we must pay a small license fee or violate the law, and we don't want to do that. One of the greatest dangers which our country is facing is disregard for law. Some people have so much money that they think they are bigger than the law. Others have so little that they seem to think that the law does not apply to them."

"We haven't much," said Benny, "and a dollar is a whole lot."

"Well, I'll advance the fee, and trust to your honesty, when the berries get ripe. And I begin to see," he added, laughing, "how Charles H. Norton, Scoutmaster, stands a good chance of going 'broke' himself."

It seemed strange to be so far from home and away from Bob's Hill, though it wasn't the first time. Dick's folks seemed glad to see us and gave us a fine dinner. Then we started for our camp, all dressed in our Scout uniforms. It made people stare to see us march down Main Street and Skinny was real chesty over it.

"Maybe we'd better be Injuns," he whispered, "seeing as how we are out West."

"We can't in these clothes," Benny told him. "Let's be Scouts to-day and Injuns to-morrow."

"And bandits every day in the week," said Bill.

Before we could stop him, he opened his mouth and gave a yell that brought folks to their front doors. Then he turned to us and called:

"Everybody. One, *two*, THREE——"

Say, Valparaiso knew we were in town before we had gone four blocks.

Our patrol has the raven for its patrol animal, raven being a high-toned name for crow, and the caw of the crow is our signal. It sounded as if a whole flock of crows had broken loose. It made

us feel better and march straighter to hear it, because there is something about a crow that makes us think of Greylock and the Bellows Pipe, Bob's Hill, and home. Some folks don't like crows—because they don't sing, I guess. They don't claim to sing, and don't try; but Patrol 1, Troop 3 of Massachusetts would rather hear them caw, soaring around in the Bellows Pipe between the mountains, than the best canary that was ever shut up in a cage.

Lots of times sitting in our cave at Peck's Falls, talking about the things that boys talk about, we hear a faint caw coming up from the mountain-side, then an answering caw nearby, and our hearts swell up until it seems as if we own the whole mountain and all outdoors, and without any signal at all, we all commence cawing to beat the band.

"We'll go up to our camping place in the inter-urban car," said Mr. Norton. "It isn't quite regular, I suppose, but we are in a strange land and we want to get our camp in shape before dark. Dick has our place all picked out, I understand, and has secured permission from the owners for us to camp

there. From what he has told me it seems all right."

The car passed Flint Lake on the right, or east side, in the rear of some cottages; then curved around the end like a great letter S, and went down the west side of another lake, which Dick said was Long.

"Lake View!" called the conductor, and that was our station.

We carried our stuff down to the water and put it in a couple of rowboats which Mr. Norton had hired. He and Skinny rowed the boats, while we boys walked along the shore, until we came to a level, grassy open place, where a big tree was growing, about one hundred feet from the water.

Dick stopped us there, and in a few moments Mr. Norton beached his boat.

"Now, John," said he, "if you and Dick will take the boat and bring that bale of straw which was unloaded from the car at the station, the rest of us will get busy with these tents."

Where we camped was on the Anderson farm. Dick knew Mr. Anderson and he said that we might

camp there as long as we wanted to, if we wouldn't cut his trees. It is a good thing to camp near a farmhouse that way, where you can get milk, butter, and eggs, and things like that. We found another farm where they raised all kinds of bees and sold us honey, but that was afterward.

We didn't try to do anything that day more than get the tents up, ready to sleep in, and a place where we could cook our supper and to bring some milk and eggs from the farmhouse. By that time we were ready to eat. We were 'most always ready to eat on that trip, especially Skinny. We surely were hungry by the time a fire had been made and the bacon, coffee, and bread and butter were ready.

"I wouldn't approve of coffee at night for you, as a rule," Mr. Norton told us, "but out in the open, working and playing hard in the pure air, they couldn't keep you awake with a shotgun."

He was wrong about that. I mean the keeping awake part, for when night came we lay there listening to the noises on the lake and talking about what we would do in the morning, until Mr. Nor-

ton told us we'd better go to sleep or we would scare the fish.

But before that, after we had eaten supper and washed up the dishes and while it was still light, we set out a flagpole, which Skinny had cut with his hatchet, and christened our camp. We had a name all picked out for it before we left home.

Hank, who is great on making inventions, rigged up the pole with an extra fish line so that we could stand on the ground and draw up the flags. When all was ready, Skinny went down to the lake and brought up a dipper of water. Benny took hold of the end of the strings, ready to pull, and the rest of us stood in front in a row, with our hats off, while Mr. Norton, smiling to himself, watched us from a seat which we had made by driving two sticks into the ground and putting a board across.

"You give the signal, Bill," said Skinny. Bill is assistant patrol leader.

"Pull!" yelled Bill, so loud that they heard him at the hotel across the lake.

Benny pulled and in a moment the American flag,

the Stars and Stripes, the prettiest flag in all the world, went fluttering to the top of the pole.

How we all yelled then! I saw Mr. Norton take his hat off and stand there with the rest of us.

"Fellers," said Skinny, waving one hand for us to keep still, "we are a long way from home, but we are still in the United States of America and don't you forget it. Don't you never go back on the flag. Will you stand by the Stars and Stripes, and Bunker Hill, and the Fourth of July? Now, all together——"

"We will," we yelled.

Then Skinny stepped forward with the dipper of water, his eyes shining and his cheeks red like an apple. "I, Skinny Miller," he said, "leader of Raven Patrol, No. 1, Troop 3, Massachusetts, name this camp '*Bob's Hill*,' and all those that don't like it will do their kicking now, or forever after hold their peace."

As he spoke, he dashed some water from the dipper on each tent, then folded his arms like a bandit and looked fierce.

"I have spoken," said he. "Let be what is."

"Pull!" shouted Bill, again.

Benny pulled once more and soon up went another flag, hanging limp at first, until the breeze caught it and floated it out so that all could read the words, "Camp Bob's Hill."

Then I gave the boys a little surprise I had been keeping to myself. Pulling it from a place where I had it hidden, I stepped to the largest tent and pinned upon it the silk banner which Mr. Norton had given us the summer before. In one corner was a black raven and the words, "Patrol 1, Troop 3, Massachusetts"; then, in large gold letters, the Scout motto, "*Be Prepared.*"

CHAPTER III

GETTING THE CAMP READY

WE spent the greater part of the next day fitting up our camp with everything we should need.

“We may as well be comfortable as not,” Mr. Norton told us. “If we were going to stay only two or three days, it wouldn’t pay to bother, but we expect to make this our home for some time to come and I am in favor of having floors in our tents. We are fortunate in being near a car line and probably can arrange to have the crew of the next car throw off what lumber we shall need for floors and other things, as they pass the camp.”

That is what we did and we were very glad, every time it rained, that we had the floors, especially one night when we came near being flooded out. When we had put in some extra stakes and fastened the tents down all around we felt that we

wouldn't be willing to trade our camp with any king for his palace, marble halls, and all such foolish things.

We didn't stop to put flies on the tents, the first night. A fly is a sort of extra roof, which keeps most of the water off the real roof when it rains. We had one extra fly which we used as a canopy and under it we built a table and benches like those in picnic parks.

When Mr. Anderson came down to see what we were up to, he told us that there were some small trees back in the woods, which we might cut, if we needed them to make chairs and tables for our kitchen.

We brought up some trees about two or three inches thick and for a chair cut two pieces eighteen inches long for the front posts and two back posts thirty-six inches long. We fastened these together at the height of the front posts and nailed boards across for a seat; then we nailed a board across the other posts at the top for a back, put on some braces, and we had a good enough chair for anybody, with the seat eighteen inches from the ground

and sixteen inches square. Besides these we put up a couple of hammocks to take it easy in and to sleep in if we should want to.

We had brought a strong box with us full of things, with a lid on hinges. When partitions had been nailed in this box, it made a good cupboard to keep our table things in and our groceries and food. We put a padlock on and kept it locked but hid the key in a hollow in a tree. We were afraid that if somebody carried it he might not be around some day when we wanted to eat.

"I think that we'd better build an oven," Mr. Norton told us, when we had things in pretty good shape. "We ought to try a little baking on our own account. It will not always be convenient to go to town."

"I could build one if I had some sheet iron," said Hank, who is always making things.

"We shall not need sheet iron except a piece of stovepipe for a chimney. Maybe we can find an old piece up at the farmhouse. We could get along with flat stones, or bricks, but stovepipe would be easier and better."

"We found an old house with a tumbled down chimney when we went after milk and eggs," said Benny. "It stands in the middle of a field back there and looks as if nobody had lived in it for a long time. I saw a piece of stovepipe there."

"Just the thing! Suppose you take somebody with you for company and go after it, and let someone else go to the farmhouse for a spade."

"Where shall we build it?" I asked, after some of the boys had started on a run.

"There are several ways to build a suitable oven. The one which I am going to try to make requires a hillside and that sloping ground over there is just the thing. I think we shall find clay enough in the soil. If not, I noticed something that looked like potter's clay in the railroad cut up there and we can plaster the inside of the oven with that."

When the boys had brought a spade, Mr. Norton dug into the hillside, cutting it back until there was a smooth face straight up and down, several feet high. Then, at the bottom of the face, we dug a little tunnel straight into the hill, three or four feet.

"Keep the opening as small as you can, boys,"

Mr. Norton told us, "and widen it out on the inside."

It wasn't an easy thing to do, but we hollowed out the sides of the tunnel, until the floor was about two feet wide. Then we arched the roof, so that it was about sixteen inches from the floor in the center.

"Now, for the chimney," said Mr. Norton, after we had stood back and looked at our work. "First we must dig a small hole from the top down into the oven at the back end."

We did that; then put the stovepipe down and filled up the chinks around it. Doing this let some more dirt down into the oven, but it didn't take long to clean it out. Finally, Mr. Norton had us bring water from the lake and wet the oven all over on the inside; then smooth off the muddy walls.

"I think that will do first-rate," he said, after we had finished. "We will leave it until to-morrow to give it time to dry. Then it will be ready for business and your Uncle Dudley will try to show you some bread like mother used to make."

"How do you bake in that thing?" I asked.

"First, you build a fire in the oven and get it

hot. After it has been well heated, pull the fire out and scrape out the ashes; then put your pans of dough inside. Cover the entrance with a board and plaster it over with mud to keep the heat from escaping. It will surprise you to see what a fine job of baking it will do."

We tried it the next day and many times afterwards and it worked fine, only I'd rather have the kind that Ma makes, any day in the week.

"We have had so much fun building the oven," said Mr. Norton next, "what's the matter with building a fireplace out of the way of the wind, one that will make cooking easy?"

"That sounds good to us," Bill told him.

"All right. We have plenty of time to-day, but if you are tired of working we can get along with an ordinary fire for a day or two."

"This ain't working," said Harry. "It's fun."

"Very well. We shall need a lot of those bricks that Benny found in the old house, and if Skinny, I mean Gabriel, has his hatchet in good condition, we'll use some more of the wood that Mr. Anderson so kindly offered to us."

"Cut out the Gabriel part. Skinny is good enough for me. That's what the fellers all call me."

"Well, Skinny, we can use the branches of a tree this time and cut them so that the tree will not be injured. We want two green posts about two inches thick, or three, and three feet long. Cut them with a fork, or crotch, at one end, as if you were getting them for a mammoth sling-shot. These are to be driven into the ground at the ends of the fire. Cut a green pole about the same thickness and long enough to reach from post to post, resting on the forks. While you boys are so pleasantly employed, I'll lie down here in the shade and think of something else for you to do."

We found him sound asleep under the tree when we had brought the things. He had been working hard all the year and we could not bear to wake him up, but he heard us pretty soon and opened his eyes.

"I declare," he said, "thinking is such hard work that I went to sleep over it. One of the best things about a vacation is that one can do pretty much as

he pleases; work when he likes; play when he likes, and be as lazy as he wants to be."

With Mr. Norton telling us how, we drove the posts into the ground until they stood firm, just far enough apart so that the pole would reach from one to the other; then we flattened the pole at each end so that it would fit into the forks snug.

"Now, give me the spade," said Mr. Norton, "and I'll do some digging to pay for the nap which I had."

He dug a trench between the posts about twenty inches wide and a foot deep and squared the sides and ends. Then we walled up the sides with bricks. At one end we built a little chimney of bricks, with a hole leading into it from the fireplace. Mr. Norton drove the posts into the ground, until a kettle hanging from the pole would just clear the fire.

We called it our "stove" and we felt proud of it when we had finished. It burned fine. The chimney gave it draft and, being below the surface of the ground, the wind did not bother it. We found that it saved fuel, for it did not take much wood to make a fire hot enough to cook by.

“The first one who goes to Valparaiso,” said Mr. Norton, “should step into a hardware store and get three or four S hooks. They will cost only a few cents and will be a great help. Then we shall be able to handle the kettles without lifting the crane every time.”

“Guess what,” said Benny. “What will we do when it rains?”

“Well, sir,” Mr. Norton told him, “I gave that some serious thought while I was sleeping a short time ago. The thing to do is to have Skinny stand over the fire with an umbrella.”

“Nothin’ doin’!” said Skinny. “But I’ll tell you one thing. I hate to see all that fire being wasted. Let’s have some eats.”

Everybody was willing. We had worked hard, although it was fun, and we were hungry.

“Mr. Norton,” said Skinny, after we had eaten all that we could and were lying around, too lazy to move. “That is a bully, good stove. How did you find out how to make it?”

“I read it in a book,” said he, winking at Bill.

CHAPTER IV

THE RAVENS FIND OLD FRIENDS

“WELL, fellows,” said Mr. Norton, a day or two later, “we are all settled and there is plenty to eat on hand. I am due in Chicago to-morrow. I do not like to leave you; still, I do not see how you can get into trouble. There is a hotel across the lake; there is a telephone at Anderson’s, and an electric car passes right back of the camp. Best of all, you are Scouts, which means that you can take care of yourselves in almost any emergency, and, you know, a Scout’s honor is to be trusted, according to our laws.”

“Scouts can take care of other folks, too,” Skinny broke in. “That’s what they’re for. We’ve been watching the lake all day to find somebody drowning, so that we could save them. We wouldn’t do a thing to ’em. Would we, fellers?”

“The lake is the only thing that I am afraid of.

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Water is different from land. But you boys can swim like ducks and these flat-bottomed boats are almost impossible to tip over. Besides, I am certain that if William really should set about it he could make them hear in Chesterton, or Valparaiso."

Bill opened his mouth at that and was going to try, but we hit him on the back so hard that he couldn't.

"I may not be able to return to-morrow. Will you be afraid to stay alone one night?"

"Who? *Us?*" said Skinny. "The Band afraid?—I mean the patrol?" He picked up a stick and everlastingly pounded the enemy.

"I guess that I ought to be anxious about the party of the second part," laughed Mr. Norton. "Anyhow, I am going and I want you to take care of my boys. It seems to me that they are a little the best bunch of fellows who ever wore the Scout uniform."

"Everybody caw!" shouted Bill, before Skinny had a chance.

The next morning, bright and early, Mr. Norton left us, we going with him as far as the car.

Along in the forenoon, after we had been swimming and had fished a little and were lying around on the shore planning what to do next, Skinny asked a question that I had been wanting to ask all the time, only I was afraid that the other boys would make fun of me.

"What was that you wrote, Dick?" said he, as if he didn't care much and had almost forgotten about it. "Wasn't somebody going to have a cottage around here? A girl or something?"

"Guess what, Skinny wants to lasso her," shouted Benny.

"Aw, g'wan! I don't, either."

"It's that Laurence girl you wrote about," Dick told him. "Don't you remember? The one who fell over the side of the canyon at Starved Rock and you boys pulled her up with a rope."

"That makes me think," said Skinny. "Don't you fellers ever go out without a rope. You never know when you'll need it."

"Where is her cottage?" I asked.

"I don't know. All I know is that I read in the *Vidette*—that's our paper, you know—that

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somebody with that name was going to spend the summer with her mother in a cottage on Flint Lake. I remember the name because part of it is like a girl and part like a boy."

"Let's track her," said Benny, "like we did that time at Starved Rock."

"How are we going to track her?"

"Well, we can hunt for her, can't we? It will be like a game."

"I'll tell you what," I said. "Let's walk clear around the lake on the beach. If we don't see her anywhere we can go to every cottage and ask for a drink of water."

We took our fish poles along so that we could pretend to be fishing and Skinny carried his rope.

We went clear around the lake, looking at the folks in swimming, until it made them mad, and hoping all the time that somebody would drown almost and give us a chance to pull him out and bring him back to life and all such things, which a Boy Scout knows about and lots of people don't.

We couldn't find a girl that looked anything like Alice except once we thought we had found her.

She was standing waist deep in the water and away from everybody, with her back toward us, looking at a boat out on the lake, but we couldn't see her face and were not sure.

"I'm going to lasso her, anyhow," Skinny whispered to us, and began to get his rope ready. "It will surprise her some, I guess."

"Great snakes! What if it ain't her?" said Bill. "I 'most know it ain't."

"She'll be surprised, all the same."

But just as he was going to throw she turned around and it was nobody that we ever had seen before, so we couldn't lasso her.

Then we started in on the cottages, asking for a drink, until Skinny said that he knew he would bust if he drank another drop, but we couldn't find anybody that looked like the folks we were after.

"Guess what," said Benny, after a while. "Let's ask everybody if they know where she lives."

"You've got a head like a tack, Benny," Bill told him. "Let me feel of it."

But Benny dodged out of the way.

"I don't like to go around asking about girls,"

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said Skinny. "It doesn't look good. Girls are all right, of course, but——"

"Ask for her mother," I told him. "We can pretend that we want to sell some huckleberries, and we do. They are getting ripe. I ate some yesterday."

That was good sense, too, if I did say it, and that was what we did. The very third place that we asked, the woman said:

"Mrs. Laurence? I think that she lives over there," pointing to a cottage that stood a little back from the lake. "She has a young daughter, hasn't she?"

"Has she, fellers?" asked Skinny, solemnly, looking around at us.

"We want to sell her some huckleberries," I put in, before anyone could answer. "They are beginning to get ripe."

"Huckleberries? Are you selling huckleberries? Good! You may bring me two quarts and be sure to get them here in time for supper. We are very fond of them. How much did you say they were?"

Say, we hadn't thought about that part and didn't

know what to tell her. She stood looking at Skinny and waiting for him to speak and all the time he was motioning for the rest of us to do it. Finally, he said:

“Pedro’s the one that knows about it. He’s our secretary.”

“Are you the one they call Pedro?” she asked me.

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Well, how much are the berries?”

I had to say something. “Fifty cents,” I told her.

“Fifty cents! What, a quart?”

Skinny punched me and I knew that I must have made a mistake.

“Fifty cents for two quarts.”

“Sakes alive!” she said. “And they told me this was a cheap place to spend the summer. Well, I’ve got to have them, anyhow. My husband is coming out from Chicago with a friend.”

“Great snakes, Pedro!” said Bill, after we had walked on. “Now you’ve gone and done it. We’ve got to get her two quarts of huckleberries, some-

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where, and I don't believe they are ripe enough to pick."

Just the same, it gave us an idea that brought in a lot of money during the next few weeks. We took orders for berries at nearly every cottage and at the hotels, and delivered them fresh every morning, but we never could get that price again.

Now that we had found the place, we hated to go up, all but Dick. He lived around there and he didn't know Alice, anyhow. So he was the one who went up. We told him to ask for a drink of water and we'd stand back out of sight and see who came out.

"I don't want any more water," said he. "I have had almost a barrel full already."

"Oh, go on, Dick," Skinny told him. "Be a good Scout. One more drink won't hurt you any."

So Dick went up and knocked on the door, while the rest of us waited. We saw him knock two or three times; then he came back.

"Nobody there," he said.

There was nothing to do except to go back to camp, it being dinner time. Hank said that he was

hungry enough to eat green huckleberries and he'd a notion to do it.

"You can laugh all you want to," I told them. "Those berries are getting ripe. I was over in the marsh yesterday and I never saw so many berries before. We can get two quarts just as easy as not."

"And get chased out by the man that owns them, and maybe put in jail. Folks that will charge a dollar for fishing in a little lake would do anything."

Before I could answer, Dick spoke up. "We don't have to steal them," said he. "I know the man; we'll find out how much he will charge us a quart, we to do the picking. Maybe some other folks will want berries. We can make a lot of money, if we work it right."

It was Hank's turn to cook and he cooked a fine dinner. We ate it and then lay down in the grass on the shore of the lake, looking off across the water. Once in a while, a boat would float past, looking like two boats, one on the lake and another, just like it, upside down in the water. We could

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hear a crow cawing off somewhere and the tinkle of a cowbell in a field nearby. It was great.

I don't know why it is, but if we had to cook at home and to wash the dishes and slick up, it would be terrible, but out there by ourselves, with the woods nearby and the lake in front and the birds singing and the fish jumping and great white clouds floating overhead, like ships up in the air, and no school, or anything, somehow it was different. Pa says that it is just the same with grown folks. He says they are only children, grown a little bigger, and that there is more or less Indian in all of us.

"Only," he says, "you boys can do pretty much what you please, and we older ones have to stay home and work and pay the bills. We haven't time to play Indian."

But Skinny says that when the Band gets older we'll live out in the woods all the time. Anyhow, we fooled around there an hour or two, talking about what we would do on the Fourth of July. Then Skinny went up to the tent for something

and in a minute we heard him calling, excited-like.

"Gee-whilikins, fellers, come here quick!"

We chased up as fast as we could, Bill grabbing a stick on the way, because we didn't know what the matter was.

"What is it?" he shouted. "A snake?"

"Snake nothin'! Look there."

We looked where he was pointing and saw a piece of paper pinned on one of the tents. Hank hadn't noticed it when he was getting dinner because he didn't have to go on that side.

"Who put it there?" I asked.

"Never mind. Read the writin' and you'll find out. You read it, Pedro, you are secretary, and put it in the minutes of the meetin'."

"Great fishes!" I shouted, when I had begun to read.

"Read it out loud, you chump," they told me. This is what I read.

"I have just seen your banner and am wondering if it is possible that you can be the Bob's Hill boys from Massachusetts who camped out at Starved Rock, summer before last. If you are, I want to

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see the boys who saved my little girl from an awful death, and that same little girl, grown some bigger, would like to see them, too. Whoever you are, I know that you are all right because you are Boy Scouts, so please come over to my cottage on the west side of Flint Lake this afternoon, prepared to stay to supper.

“MRS. M. A. LAURENCE.

“P.S.—I’ll hang out a flag, so that you may know which cottage.”

It’s funny how things happen sometimes, isn’t it? She and Alice had been out walking and had run across our camp at the very time we were looking for them.

“Fellers,” said Skinny, after everybody had read the letter. “Those that are in favor of going, stand on one foot and hop three times.”

There was great hopping for a minute. Some of the boys didn’t know Alice, but the supper part sounded good to them and they hopped as hard as anybody.

“You haven’t hopped yourself, Skinny,” I told him, after I had counted the vote.

“I don’t have to,” said he. “I’m leader of the

patrol and captain of the Band, ain't I? But will I go? Will I be there? Will I eat?"

Then he straightened up, folded his arms like a bandit, and commenced to speak a part of his school piece:

*"The boy, oh, where was he?
Ask——"*

That was as far as he got, for just then Bill motioned to us and we all grabbed him and started for the lake. He broke away in a minute and ran back; then beckoned for us to come.

"All I've got to say," he told us, "is right there on the tent." And he pointed to our Scout motto, "Be Prepared."

"Now," said he, "let's go swimming."

About three o'clock we went over to where the huckleberry man lived and told him what we wanted. He laughed when he heard about the woman.

"I'll tell you what," said he, "I've great respect for boys who can charge twenty-five cents a quart

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for huckleberries and get away with it,—so much so that I am going to let you have those two quarts for nothing. But first I want you to promise to help me pick the crop, commencing day after tomorrow morning. I'll give you three cents a quart and you certainly will come in handy."

We promised to do it, only Skinny told him that we wouldn't work on the Fourth of July for anybody and Dick arranged so that we could pick and sell to the people in the cottages and hotels, when we wanted to. It was good fun, too, only pretty hot work, sometimes, and we made a lot of money. We turned it all over to Mr. Norton to pay for our fishing licenses and for things to eat.

The huckleberries grew in a marsh, north of Long Lake, just before you get to Wahob. That marsh, the owner says, is the most valuable part of his farm.

We all pitched in and soon had our two quarts and two more which we paid the man for. We wanted them for Mrs. Laurence. Then we started for Flint Lake.

CHAPTER V

ENLISTING FOR THE WAR

SKINNY, Bill, Hank, Benny, and myself were acquainted with Mrs. Laurence and Alice. We met them down near Starved Rock in Illinois, the summer that we were camping there. They were Chicago people and were spending the summer at a farmhouse. Once when we were having trouble with a tramp, Alice saw us through some bushes and brought us help. That is how we became acquainted.

One day after that she fell over a cliff and would have been killed if she had not caught in a small tree that was growing out of the side of the canyon part way down. We started to let Skinny down to her with a rope, but he was so heavy that he nearly pulled us all over. As soon as we could get him back we let down the lightest one in the bunch, which was Benny Wade. Benny fastened the rope around her shoulders and we pulled her up while

he hung on to the tree. Then we let the rope down to him. It wasn't anything much to do, but it made a great hit with Mrs. Laurence.

Just the same, we felt bashful-like, especially the boys who did not know them. We wanted to go and didn't want to, like when you want to go swimming and the water is cold. But when we had come near the cottage we began to feel different, for there was the flag, just as Mrs. Laurence had said, and under it was a banner with some printing on it. When we were close enough we could read the words:

"WELCOME TO THE BOYS OF BOB'S HILL."

It made us feel so good that we all stood around Skinny, and when he said three, gave our patrol signal, which is the call of our patrol animal.

"Caw! Caw! Caw!" we yelled, as much like a crow as we could.

Then the cottage door opened with a bang and out rushed Mrs. Laurence and Alice to meet us. We knew Mrs. Laurence in a minute. She hadn't changed a bit.

I thought she was going to cry at first. She grabbed Skinny and me; then caught sight of Benny and made a rush for him and pulled Hank and Bill from behind a tree, talking and laughing all the time.

"Gee, Pedro," said Skinny, as soon as he could break loose. "What if Alice grabs us that way!"

But she didn't. She only shook hands and told us how glad she was to see us. And grown! Say, we hardly knew her. Two years make a lot of difference with girls.

"Great snakes!" Bill whispered. "I hope she doesn't fall over any cliff this time; we'd have hard work pulling her up."

"Now, who are these other boys?" asked Mrs. Laurence. We had forgotten to introduce them.

We had great fun that afternoon, talking over old times and getting acquainted with Alice all over again, and didn't go back to camp until almost dark.

"Wait a minute, boys," called Mrs. Laurence after we had started. And Alice came running up with a cake wrapped up in a newspaper.

It was lonesome that night, with Mr. Norton gone, but we didn't mind it much. After we had gone to bed, we could hear a piano going at the hotel on the other side of the lake and voices across the water.

Early next morning we were awakened by Skinny.

"Gee-whilikins, fellers!" he shouted. "Come here quick."

We rushed out of the tents, still sleepy, and found him looking at the newspaper, which had been wrapped around the cake.

"I wasn't going to eat any, honest," he said, "but I thought I'd see what kind of cake it was and if there were any raisins in it. What do you know about it? This paper says there is going to be war. We're going down to lick Mexico. I've been so busy that I hadn't heard of it."

Then he read to us what the paper said. It was all about that there was going to be a war with Mexico and they wanted to get more soldiers into the army.

We were all excited about it and Skinny's cheeks

grew redder and redder, all the time we were eating breakfast.

"Fellers," said he, when we had finished. "We are a long way from Bob's Hill but, betcher life, we are in the United States of America."

"Course we are," Benny told him. "We are in Indiana and it's a good place to be."

Skinny didn't pay any attention. "Have we forgotten Bunker Hill?" he said.

"Great snakes!" said Bill, "I came near forgetting Bunker Hill."

"Look here; those Mexicans call us 'Yankee pigs.' Are we going to stand for that?"

"It makes me mad," I told him, "but what can we do?"

"Do! We can enlist. That's what we can do. We can go down there and clean them out. Can't we?"

"Do you mean, join the army and be soldiers?" asked Benny, in a scared voice and with his eyes sticking out like saucers. "We don't dast."

"Betcher life, that's what I mean. We're Scouts, ain't we, and the Boy Scouts were great stuff that

time what Mr. Norton told us about, down in Africa, somewhere."

"I remember, it was at a place called Mafeking, when General Baden-Powell was in command and the enemy had them surrounded," I told him. "The boys carried messages through the rain of bullets, and things like that, so that the men could keep on fighting. It was great. That was what started the Boy Scout movement in England."

"Were they Negro boys?" asked Dick, when he heard that it had happened in Africa. Dick had never been a real Boy Scout.

"They were English," Benny told him, "and they were not afraid of anything."

"We ought to be able to do it, if they could."

"Betcher life," said Skinny. "We are Americans, ain't we? Look at what the Americans did to the English at Bunker Hill. They waited behind a fence until they could see the whites of the enemy's eyes; then let 'em have it."

Skinny folded his arms and looked around at us, fierce; then began:

*" Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volleyed and th——"*

"Aw, cut it out, can't you?" said Bill. "That wasn't at Bunker Hill. It was some other fight. What's the good of enlisting? It will break up the camp."

"What do we care for the camp, when our country needs us? Besides, we'll have a bigger camp down in Mexico and the band will play after supper in the evening."

Skinny grabbed a stick and shouldered it like a gun; then he marched up and down like a soldier. Every time he came to the turn he would caw. Say, it sounded good to us, and we all found guns and marched after him.

"Where is the place to enlist?" asked Harry, after a while. We hadn't thought of that.

"Where's the place to do it, Dick?" said Skinny. "You live around here and ought to know."

"Search me. Maybe it's at Mayor Sisson's office in Valparaiso."

“ We ought to have a meeting and take a vote,” I told them. “ It’s important.”

Skinny looked disgusted. “ Voting is all right,” said he, “ when there is time; but where would Paul Revere have been if he had stopped to take a vote when the lantern was hung in the belfry, down in Boston, and how many votes did George Washington take when he surrounded the enemy, I’d like to know? ”

“ Where did it all happen, Skinny? ” asked Bill. “ I mean about Washington surrounding the enemy? ”

“ Never you mind where it happened. It happened, all right, and there wasn’t any voting on it. I’ll bet you a million dollars there wasn’t.”

“ But this is different,” I told him. “ We ain’t generals, or anything like that.”

“ All right, then, vote on it if you have to, but it ain’t my style.”

He grabbed his hatchet and pounded on the table. “ All that are in favor of going down to Mayor What’s-his-name’s office and ’listing to lick the Mexicans, say ‘ Bunker Hill.’ ”

We all said it except Bill. "It ain't that I'm afraid," he told us. "If anybody thinks that I'm afraid, just let me hear him tell me so. That's all I've got to say about it. But if we're going to fight, I'd rather fight Injuns. Besides, I promised Alice Laurence that I'd buy her an ice cream soda the first chance I had."

We all set up a yell at that and make a grab for him to duck him in the lake, but he got away from us.

"We'll fight Injuns, all right," Skinny told him, when we were quiet again. "There are all kinds of Injuns in Mexico. You'll get all the Injuns you want, and then some. I read it in a book."

That made it all right with Bill. He grabbed a knife out of the tent and scalped Indians around there for a minute and a half, yelling to beat the band.

"Guess what," said Benny, as soon as he could make himself heard. "It's a good thing that Skinny didn't ask us to say any of those Mexican names when we voted. We couldn't do it. Bunker Hill is easy."

“The Redcoats didn’t find it so easy. Let’s take a car down to Valparaiso; it will be quicker. We can get off at the edge of town and march in. It’ll look better. Now, let’s go swimming; there will be time before the car comes.”

When we jumped off the car and formed in line, with Bill carrying the American flag and Skinny waving his hatchet, it made folks stare. We marched down the middle of the street and, as we didn’t have any drum or band, every little while Bill would let out a yell and shake the flag. It was great, and everybody rushed out of the houses to see us go by. One old soldier leaned out of a window and waved a flag at us. We all felt proud and Skinny was real chesty over it.

“The Band, I mean the patrol, is the stuff,” said he. “Uncle Sam doesn’t have to call twice for fighters when we are around.”

But when we reached the mayor’s office we kind of hated to go up, not knowing him, or anything.

“You go first, Dick,” we told him, “and see if he is there. You live here, you know.”

Dick came back in a minute. "He's there, all right," said he, "and he looks fierce. I guess he's mad about something."

"Great snakes!" said Bill. "I wish I hadn't come. He'll run us in; I 'most know he will."

"If you are afraid," said Skinny, "give me the flag. He won't dast touch the flag."

He grabbed it and started up the stairs, all of us following and everybody walking on tiptoe, so as not to make any noise. When we came to the door, which stood open, we stopped and tried to make Dick go in first, but he wouldn't do it. Finally, we grabbed Skinny and pushed him in; then marched in after him.

You ought to have seen Skinny when we pushed him in. He was scared, then mad; but when he was really in and the mayor was looking to see what all the racket was about, he braced up. We thought that the mayor was mad at first, but the flag fixed him. When he saw Skinny with the flag he seemed sort of paralyzed.

"Company, halt!" shouted Skinny.

We halted as soon as we could, making a lot of noise doing it, and stood there in a row in front of the mayor.

“Salute!”

We gave the Scout salute, and you needn't believe me if you don't want to, but the mayor saluted us back. He was a big man with whiskers and if he had had on a uniform would have looked like a general.

“What is the purpose of this invasion?” he asked, after we had finished saluting and were trying to think what to say. “Is this an army or a committee? Aren't you a little ahead of the game? Fourth of July isn't until next week.”

Skinny motioned for me to say something, being secretary, but I shook my head and Bill was looking out of the window. So he had to speak.

“Are you the mayor?”

“I have that inestimable felicity, by virtue of the suffrages of my fellow-citizens,” said he. He wrote it down afterwards so that I could put it in the minutes of the meeting.

“To what do I owe the honor of this visit?”

"We are Boy Scouts of America, Patrol 1, Troop 3, Adams, Massachusetts."

The mayor saluted again, when Skinny said that, and made a bow.

"This is an even greater honor than I supposed," he said.

Skinny swelled up over that and it made us all feel good. He nodded his head to us as if to say, "Did you hear him? What did I tell you?"

"Oh, that's all right," he said. "We are camping out on Long Lake and it's great. Ain't it, fellers? I am patrol leader and captain of the Band. Bill is assistant patrol leader and Pedro is secretary."

"What can I do for you, Captain? I heard that there were some Scouts camping out at the lakes. I hope that there has been no trouble and that you approve of our fair city."

"We want to enlist."

"Enlist? Where? What for?"

"In the army. We want to help lick Mexico. We didn't know about it until we read it this morning, or we'd have come before."

Skinny pulled the newspaper out of his pocket and pointed at the big headlines.

“Let me see that paper a minute.”

The mayor looked it over and handed it back.

“I don’t like to dampen your enthusiasm,” said he, “but the truth should be spoken. The war is over. That paper is two months old.”

It surprised us when he told us that and showed us the date, some time in May, and we didn’t know what to say. The mayor sat there a minute kind of chuckling to himself; then went on:

“Let me say this: If all the boys in the country are like you, and I believe that most of them are, this Nation need have no fears. I am proud of you. I have not the power to enlist soldiers; I only appoint policemen and not many of them. The enlisting is done by agents of the government at what are called recruiting stations. But I am proud of you, just the same, and I want to shake hands with every one of you. Should any of you be arrested on the Fourth of July, send word to me and I will get you out.”

“The marshal at home,” Benny told him, “came

near arresting Pedro once because he sent in a fire alarm on the Fourth of July. We wanted them to ring the fire bell, along with the church bells, at four o'clock in the morning, to celebrate. They told us not to ring the church bells because it made folks mad to be waked up. Tom said—Tom was captain before Skinny was—Tom said that it would not be right not to ring it. He said for us always to stand by our country and the Fourth of July."

"And you stood by them, did you?"

"Well, I heard the bells ringing at four o'clock—fire bell and all."

"I see," he said. "I've an idea that it would be a good plan to nail the city down while you are in our midst."

Then a thought came to him. "We are going to have a parade on the Fourth," he said. "It will be a big one. There will be the police and fire departments and all kinds of floats, school children, a brass band, and I don't know what all. I want you Scouts in the parade in full uniform, right back of the band. What do you say?"

"We say, yes," Skinny told him, after we had

whispered together. "We'll be glad to do it; it's for our country."

"That's the stuff. Report here at nine o'clock on the morning of the Fourth."

An hour later, when we were standing on a street corner, trying to make up our minds whether to walk back to camp or ride, we missed Bill and couldn't find him anywhere.

"Guess what, maybe he has been arrested already," said Benny. "We'll have to tell the mayor."

"Let's walk back," said Skinny. "We'll spend the money for ice cream soda. Maybe Bill will show up before we start."

We went into an ice cream store and then stood there, paralyzed. There was Bill, as big as life, eating ice cream soda with Alice Laurence.

CHAPTER VI

AROUND THE CAMPFIRE

WHEN Mr. Norton came back from Chicago the next day, he found everything ready for a campfire. We had brought sticks from the woods back of us and across the lake, and when our Scoutmaster jumped off the car at Lake View station he found us waiting for him.

"You are all here, I see," he said, as we walked through the fields back toward the camp. "How did you get along?"

It seemed to tickle him when he heard how near we had come to enlisting.

"Patriotism is all right," he told us. "Every man of us, every boy, should be willing to defend his country with his life, if need be, just as he would defend his home, but war is a terrible thing and fighting seems a poor way to settle disputes. Other people and other nations have certain rights

which should be respected. It seems to me that you boys could do more good living for your country than by dying for her. There is a patriotism of peace, which ought to be practiced more than it is. It is a patriotism which leads men to do the right thing for their country and their neighbors when the band is not playing and people are not applauding. What do you say, Captain?"

"I say so, too," said Skinny, "but, somehow, when I think of Bunker Hill I want to go out and beat up the enemy."

"Napoleon," put in Benny, "he didn't think that way, Mr. Norton. He waved his sword and went for 'em like sixty. I don't know what they were fighting about, but it was great."

"Napoleon could fight," Skinny told him, "but I'll bet a million dollars that George Washington could have licked him with one arm tied behind his back."

"That was because Napoleon was little and Washington was so much bigger."

"In reading history," said Mr. Norton, "you will notice that many of the men who have had

the greatest influence on the world were small in stature. I came near saying most of them. Washington and Lincoln were large men, but I am inclined to think that they were exceptions to the rule."

"Why is it?"

"I don't know, unless it is because the little fellow works harder. Napoleon was first called the 'little corporal' in derision and he started in to show them. I think that history will bear me out when I say that he certainly did show them. It is brain not stature that counts these days. A healthy body is necessary to a healthy brain and it is a good thing to be big and strong, but it is the man who can think and imagine and has high ideals, not the prize fighter, who does the most for the world."

"What is this?" he asked, when we had come within sight of the camp and he saw the pile of wood. "Are we going to have a camp-fire?"

We told him that we were and that we wanted him to tell a story.

"Benny was asking me a question the other day and when I was in Chicago I stepped into the library and found out something about it, for fear that he would ask me again. Benny has a way of asking questions that keep me busy. He wanted to know how all these lakes came to be here for us to fish in. Suppose that I tell you something about that?"

It was growing dark when we finally lighted the fire and began with an Indian dance around it, while Mr. Norton looked on and laughed.

"I believe that you boys would have made first-class Indians," he said.

Skinny led the way, waving his hatchet and making up Indian words to a song that he was singing, and we all circled around the fire after him. Then we threw ourselves down on the ground, where the firelight drove away the gathering shadows, and Mr. Norton began.

"Once upon a time," he said, "many, many thousand years ago, a big, old glacier that lived way up North came down to this part of the country for a visit."

"What is a glacier, Mr. Norton?" asked Benny, getting up close to him.

"A glacier is a great body of ice. It came about in this way, so the wise men tell us, who can read the signs. Snow fell on the northern part of the American continent during hundreds of centuries and it never melted."

"Gee!" said Skinny. "That was some snow. Say, it must have been deep. It would have been great for a fort, only it wouldn't pack."

"You are stoppin' the story, Skinny," Bill told him. "Go on, Mr. Norton. What happened then?"

"Well, then it snowed some more, and the next day it snowed. Finally, in the course of thousands of years, perhaps, the great weight of the accumulated snow squeezed the bottom layers into a sort of porous ice. In time, this enormous field of ice became what we call a glacier and began to move."

"Where were the people?" asked Benny.

"There were not any people around. It was too soon. God was getting the earth ready for them and He used the glacier as a huge plane and grind-

ing machine to plane off the surface of the earth and grind up the rocks into soil, so that the farmers in some far-off time might raise corn and wheat and other things to eat.

“It moved so slowly that if you had been there you hardly could have seen any motion at all, but gradually it slid toward the south and southwest. The way scientists can tell the direction it moved is by studying the grooves made by the rocks as they slid along.”

“Why does everything move south?” put in Benny again, before anyone could stop him.

“Hoosac River doesn’t,” Skinny told him. “It flows north and it has no business to. There ain’t any sense in a river flowing north.”

“It is a good thing to go South in the winter time,” Mr. Norton went on, “and it was winter in British America all the time those days. As the glacier moved along, great masses of partly decayed rock and clay from jutting cliffs fell upon it and stole a ride. Larger masses of rock became frozen into the ice, and acted as a plane or drag. Hills were smoothed off and valleys were filled in. Rock

was ground into gravel and, still finer, into soil, as the glacier made its way toward our camp. In this way several glaciers came down from the North at different times. The soil which they brought with them is called drift and it is this old drift that makes the farms of northern Indiana and Illinois so fertile. It varies in depth from 90 to 141 feet."

"Is that the way God made the world?"

"That was one way. He had many different tools and forces at work and they still are working. He isn't through with creation yet, by any means. Among other things, He put us here to help Him. We are sort of partners of the Almighty. Did you ever think of that? Isn't that a big thing? Just think of that when you feel like doing something that will injure the business."

"Did the glacier scoop out these lakes?" asked Hank, after Mr. Norton had sat still a few moments, thinking.

"Not exactly. It is thought that they were formed by the last of the glaciers which paid this part of the world a visit, or rather by one part of the glacier. The glaciers came down several times,

like an army overrunning the land. Finally, there would be some change in the climate and they would melt back again. Whenever a glacier had come down as far as it could, it halted long enough to deposit the stuff it was carrying and the accumulation is called a terminal moraine. The terminal moraine around Valparaiso is famous.

“The glacier’s action was something like that of a snow shovel. When you push a shovel through snow, piles of snow heap up in front and fall off at the sides, forming hills and ridges. That is what makes so many hills and valleys around here. The glacier pushed up great ridges in places. In other places it scooped out hollows and, here and there, it dropped off great heaps of gravel or soil and sometimes boulders. There are great boulders in many parts of the country, which cannot be accounted for except on the theory that they stole a ride on some old glacier, much as you boys catch on bobs in the winter, and when they dropped off they stayed there.

“In some places great sections of ice broke off from the main body and sank into the mass of

stuff the glacier was leaving behind. In the course of time this mass hardened and the ice melted. If you should bury a big cake of ice in the ground, Dick, what would it leave when it melted?"

"Mud."

"I guess you are right about that, but that was not what I meant."

"Water," said Benny.

"You are getting warm, all right. What do you say, Hank?"

"A hole."

"That is it. When those great masses of ice melted they left huge holes, which filled up with water from springs and from little streams which began to pour down the hillsides. It is thought that these beautiful lakes were all formed in that way. There are probably a thousand of such lakes in Indiana, all formed by glacial action. Some are little more than holes in the ground and they are called 'kettle hole lakes' in the geologies. One of the most famous of the kettle hole lakes is what people here call Bullseye Lake. It lies close to the roadside, between here and Valparaiso, and

while it is less than a half acre in extent, it is very deep."

"It hasn't any bottom," Skinny told him. "A man told me so. And once a horse ran away and ran into it, wagon and driver and all, and they never were heard of again. There don't anybody dast fool around Bullseye."

"I know that is what people say, but these bottomless lakes will be found to have a bottom, probably, if you go deep enough. Bullseye is forty-five feet deep, I am sure, and perhaps deeper. It is just a deep hole in the ground, filled with water."

"How thick was that glacier?" asked Harry.

"Probably five hundred feet."

"Great snakes!" said Bill. "That was some cake of ice! What became of it?"

"When the glacier had come as far south as this, for some reason it did not come farther but began to melt back. It took a long time, of course, and as it melted a great body of water formed at the south end, which grew bigger and bigger, until it covered an enormous area. Geologists have named that great body of water, 'Lake Chicago.'

“Did you notice when you were camping on Illinois River, at Starved Rock, that the river-way was much wider than the river itself and that the ledges of rock at the sides had been worn away by water?”

“Yes,” said Skinny. “We talked about it and wondered what made it so. There are all kinds of canyons there and we found a cave. That was how we became acquainted with Alice Laurence. She fell over the edge of a canyon and lodged on a bush. It was lucky for her that I had my rope along. You need a rope when you are out that way.”

“Well, Lake Chicago once poured down through Desplaines, Illinois, and Mississippi Rivers into the Gulf of Mexico and, believe me, it was a mighty stream. That was another of God’s tools used in building the world, or, at least, this part of it.”

“It was some hunk of ice, all right, all right, that fell off and made the hole under Lake Michigan,” Bill told him, after we had sat quiet a few minutes thinking it over.

“The creation of Lake Michigan was a different story,” said Mr. Norton. “It was not formed that way.”

“How did they do it?”

“Millions of years ago, ages before the glaciers formed and came down, all this land around here was under the ocean. After a long time something pushed up the bottom of the ocean and dry land appeared. Bob’s Hill and Greylock were pushed up about the same time.”

I heard Bill whisper, “Great snakes!” but Skinny motioned for him to keep still, and Mr. Norton went on:

“The basins of these Great Lakes were once big valleys, with rivers and brooks, little lakes and surrounding hills, but no Boy Scouts. Thousands of years passed and all the time the rivers and smaller streams were at work scooping out the land and making the valley deeper and bigger. Later, the glaciers formed, came down and went back, changing the face of Nature and leaving Long Lake for us to enjoy in far-off ages. Lake Chicago poured its floods down through the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico. Then, in some way the earth’s crust pushed up some more and the direction of the flow was changed toward the east, down the St.

Lawrence into the Atlantic Ocean. These great valleys became permanently filled with water, forming great inland seas of fresh water. Each wave that rolled up on the shore carried with it a little sand, which dried in the sun and then was blown back from the shore line and finally piled up into hills of sand. They are called dunes and those between here and Gary are famous and well worth a visit."

"I didn't know how the earth was made before," said Hank. "How do they know so much about it?"

"God wrote it down with His own hand in His own book. Everyone does not understand the language, but geologists, who have studied it and learned how to read it, find the record very plain."

"What is it, Benny?" he went on, when he saw that Benny was trying to say something.

"I thought that all God had to do was to say 'Let it be so' and it was so."

"The story of the creation as told in the Bible," said Mr. Norton, "does not go into details like God's own record in the rocks. You should under-

stand that God's days were thousands and millions of our years long, every one of them busy with the wonderful work of building the earth and the stars; then peopling the earth and for all we know to the contrary, millions of other worlds. He used all kinds of tools in the work—volcanoes, rivers, snow and frost and ice, wind, even the humble angleworm, and finally when everything was ready He set forces in motion that in after ages produced the Boys of Bob's Hill, who are having the time of their lives on Long Lake and who ought to be going to bed."

"Gee, Pedro," whispered Skinny, just as I was falling asleep. "How does he know so much? It would make me lopsided to carry all that around."

CHAPTER VII

A MAIDEN IN DISTRESS

WE were pretty busy after that, at the camp, picking huckleberries and having fun, but the Fourth of July was mostly fun. We went to the mayor's office in Valparaiso at nine o'clock and he told us where to go to get into the parade. We marched behind the band, Bill carrying the flag and Skinny in front, with his cheeks as red as fire and feeling bigger and bigger every time the crowd cheered, which was almost all the time.

We couldn't understand what ailed Skinny one morning soon after the Fourth. All the way to the huckleberry marsh he dodged around among the bushes and made us walk close behind so as to leave only one track. He hadn't acted that way before since coming from Bob's Hill.

"Surrounding the enemy, Skinny?" asked Bill.

He didn't say a word but dropped flat behind a

fence and motioned for us to do the same. As we lay there, wondering what it all was about, we heard a noise in the distance, coming nearer.

"Steady, men," warned Skinny, aiming his stick through the fence and getting ready to shoot. "Remember Bunker Hill and watch for the whites of their eyes."

Nearer and nearer came the noise, until, with a rumble and a roar, the morning car from Valparaiso whizzed past. Then we wriggled under the bottom wire of the fence and out upon the railroad track.

"Great snakes, fellows!" said Bill. "That was a close call."

Then we charged down the track after the enemy, yelling like Indians, or boys; Pa says there isn't much difference.

In this way we soon came to the huckleberry marsh. As you go toward the marsh along the track from the south, Deep Lake is on the left-hand side, looking so small that it seems as if you could throw a stone across it. You can't, though, for we tried it. On the right-hand side is a road

leading up to and through some woods and over to Long and Canada Lakes. Beyond, on both sides of the railroad, are the huckleberries, with another little lake, or pond, at the east end of the marsh. At the south edge of the marsh, east of the track and part way to the woods, stands a small building, called a "shack," where the berry pickers bring their berries to be crated. From there the crates are loaded on to a car and sent up to the city.

We went toward the shack the first thing and Skinny had run on ahead to let the man know that we were on the job. Suddenly, we saw him stop, look at something; then beckon to us, excitedly, and stand there pointing.

We went on a run until we could see what he was pointing at and all crowded around him, nearly as excited as he was. For there on the back of the shack, as big as life, drawn on the black tar paper with green chalk, was the Sign, which we hadn't seen before since we left home.

There was a big circle with a bird in the center. We couldn't tell what kind of a bird it was, but we knew it was meant for a crow, our patrol

animal. Above the crow was the figure 7 and below, 12.

That is the way we call our meetings at home, only we do not always put the same thing in the center of the circle. Sometimes it is a crow, sometimes a coffin, and sometimes a tomahawk, according to whether we are Boy Scouts, bandits, or Indians. The circle means the cave and the figures tell the day and hour of the meeting. That Sign looked good to us.

“Hurrah!” shouted Benny, so loud that the other berry pickers looked around to see what was going on. “It says meet at the cave to-day at twelve o’clock.”

Then he stopped a moment and looked off across the marsh toward Bob’s Hill, Peck’s Falls, and our cave, almost a thousand miles away. I knew that he could see them as he stood there, just as I could see them when I shut my eyes and just as I could see our house at the foot of Bob’s Hill, with Ma at the front door looking up and down the street for me. It made me feel sort of choky for a minute and all the other boys looked sober.

"There ain't any cave, fellers," he went on. "What good is a place and what good are Signs when there ain't any cave?"

"I'd give a pail of huckleberries right now to be inside our cave at home for five minutes," said Hank. "It's the Sign, all right, but how about it, Skinny? What does it mean?"

"It says, 'Meet at the cave at twelve o'clock,' doesn't it?"

We all told him that it did.

"Well, that settles it. The Sign never lies. Did the Sign ever lie, Pedro?"

"Not so as you could hear it," I told him.

"Then we'll do it. Meet there. That's all."

"But where is it, Skinny?" Benny asked. "Where is there any cave? I've been looking for a cave ever since we've been here and the only thing I could find was a woodchuck's hole."

"Never mind where it is. It's somewhere, for the Sign says so. Leave it to me. Old Long Knife will show you the way. I have spoken."

"Now that the speakin' is over," said Bill, "let's go through this berry patch like crows through a

grain field. Any kind of an old cave would look good to little Willie. Betcher life I've spoken, too."

"Now, you've said something," we told him.

I saw the berry man watching us two or three times that morning, wondering to see us working so fast.

When we finally left camp to look for the cave it was half-past eleven o'clock and we were hungry. There wasn't time to cook dinner and get to the cave by noon, so we carried some bacon and other things with us. It took longer to start than we had counted on, for Skinny was bound that he would go back and get his rope.

"We may not need it," he said, "but you never can tell what will happen and we'll be sure to need it if we don't have it along."

We followed the shore of the lake south to the wagon road; then went up the road west toward Anderson's. Just before we reached the house, Skinny turned north into a field and led us a quarter of a mile back through Anderson's pasture into some woods. After a little, we entered a winding

gully with high sides, pretty to look at and filled with trees and underbrush.

Motioning for us to keep quiet, he crept forward until he came almost to the turn in the gully. Then he dropped flat and wriggled around the turn, so hidden among the bushes and in the grass that I could hardly see him myself, although I knew where to look.

In another moment, we heard the call of a crow and knew that it was safe to go ahead. We found Skinny pointing at the shadow of a dead tree trunk which stood there alone, like a ghost soldier, guarding the ravine.

As soon as we all had gathered around he took out his watch and held it in his hand, waiting. Looking over his shoulder, I could see that it was almost twelve.

"It will be noon in two minutes," I said. "Where is your cave? The wind in the trees sounds like cooking bacon and makes me hungry."

Skinny didn't say a word but stood there looking at his watch, as still as the tree trunk itself.

When both hands pointed exactly at twelve he spoke.

“The hour has come. Now, fellers, get busy. Follow me and mum’s the word!”

He walked straight out from the end of the shadow ten paces, then turned and stepped thirty-five paces at right angles down the ravine, counting them aloud as he went.

We followed after, stepping in his tracks, Indian fashion, until at the thirty-fifth step he stopped and held up one hand.

“S-s-s-t!” he hissed. “Is anybody following us?”

We turned and looked. Nothing was there except a squirrel scolding us from a hole in a tree. When we turned back, Skinny was gone. He had disappeared as completely as if the earth had opened and swallowed him.

We didn’t know what to make of it at first; then we began to look around. In front of us a tree had fallen over from the side of the ravine, the great roots forming a tangled mass, from which ferns and vines were growing. Peering around the end,

we found an opening leading into a sort of cave, and inside was Skinny, laughing at us.

“Didn’t I tell you that the Sign never lies?” he exclaimed. “This isn’t any great shakes of a cave, but any port will do in a storm. Now, you know how to find it. You always have to look for the shadow of a certain tree at noon and take so many steps from that. I read it in a book.”

“Did the book say anything about eats?” asked Hank. “I’ll be gnawing bark in a minute and Mr. Anderson might not like to have his trees spoiled.”

“We don’t need any book for that,” Bill told him. “A still, small voice in the pit of my stummick tells me when it is dinner time and betcher life I can hear it now.”

Maybe that you think dinner doesn’t taste good out in the woods that way, sitting in front of your cave door. We ate until we couldn’t have eaten any more if it had been turkey. After that we lay around in the grass under the trees, talking about Bob’s Hill and the folks at home.

Then all of a sudden we heard a scream, and it was a girl’s voice!

It's scary to hear somebody yell that way in the woods, especially if it's a girl. We jumped to our feet and listened. The scream did not come again, but we heard an awful bellowing, from some place ahead, out of sight in the winding ravine. It made my blood run cold.

If it hadn't been for the scream we should have run, but that scream was too much for Skinny, who always is hoping to rescue some maiden in distress, like the knights did in olden times. Every boy grabbed the first club he could find and we crept quietly down the ravine until we could see around the turn into a place where it broadened out. There was no one in sight except a big black and white monster, which stood at the foot of a tree, tearing up the ground with its horns and bellowing.

"Anderson's bull!" said Skinny in a whisper. "I forgot all about him."

We knew all about that Holstein bull and had been warned to keep out of his reach. He was called "Calamity" and was well named, for he had nearly killed several people.

"But who screamed?" I said, "and where is she?"

Just then, as if in answer to my question, a voice came out of the tree. It was a girl's voice, and she yelled for help to beat the band. I'll bet that they heard her in Chesterton.

"Fellers," said Skinny, but low so that the bull couldn't hear him, "if that isn't Alice Laurence's voice I'm a Dutchman."

"She's alive, anyhow," I told him, "and that is something."

We knew that she was all right and so went back out of sight, where it was safe, to talk things over. The Boy Scouts of Raven Patrol are as brave as most folks, but fooling around Calamity Anderson when he was mad was a job which we didn't hanker after. Skinny wanted to smoke him out. The grass was dry and the wind was blowing toward Calamity. It seemed like a good way to do, until we happened to think that it would smoke out Alice, too. So we had to give that up.

We had just decided to go for Mr. Anderson

when Alice began to yell again. That settled Skinny.

"We've got to do it, fellers," said he. "Raven Patrol never let a maiden cry in vain. Get your clubs ready and we'll charge down on Calamity, yelling like Injuns. Maybe it will scare him."

"And then again," said Bill, "maybe it won't."

"We've got to do it, anyhow, or we dassn't go back to Mr. Norton."

"If he doesn't scare," whispered Benny to me, as we crept around the turn, "I see the tree that I am going to climb."

Skinny was scared. I could see that plain enough, and so were we all. I saw him wetting his lips with his tongue, which he always does when frightened, but he kept on going and in a minute he straightened up and shouted:

"Scouts, to the rescue! *Charge!*"

With that, we started, yelling so loud that it almost scared me, Bill Wilson making more noise than anybody.

When Calamity heard us, he turned around to see what had broken loose and stood there looking at

us with bloodshot eyes, bellowing and tearing up the ground and trying to make up his mind which one to kill first.

We went as close as we dared and then, when he didn't run, we stopped, not knowing what to do next.

"Great snakes!" I heard Bill saying to himself. "I wish I hadn't come."

This was Calamity's chance. I heard another scream from the tree as the bull started for Bill.

"Run, Bill, run," we yelled.

We didn't have to tell him that and he didn't wait to hear. He dodged and away he went.

Just then Calamity caught sight of Skinny, looking pale, he was so scared, and with a rush took after him.

"Dodge, Skinny," we shouted. "He's coming."

Say, Skinny is some dodger, all right. Then the bull caught sight of me. I didn't know what happened after that, for I was too busy to look. When Benny whispered to me about his tree before we charged, I picked one out, too, and I guess all the boys did. It was an easy one to climb and

the way I went up surprised myself, to say nothing about Calamity. As soon as I felt safe, I caught hold of a branch and leaned forward to where I could see what was going on.

Calamity stood all alone. There was not a Scout in sight.

"Caw," I yelled, "caw, caw!"

From nearly every tree around there I heard answering caws and I knew that the Boy Scouts of Bob's Hill were safe.

"Are you there, fellers?" called Skinny, who felt better, now that he knew the bull couldn't get at us.

"I am," said Hank, "all that is left of me. I left some of my legs sticking to the tree on the way up."

"The secretary will call the roll."

"Call nothin!" I told him. "This isn't any meetin'. I don't know what it is, but it's something else."

I thought I heard some snickering over in the next tree, where I knew Alice was. Then she spoke.

"Oh, boys," said she, "I am so glad that you came. I was just on the way over to your camp

to invite you all to our cottage to spend the afternoon and stay to supper."

Then she burst into peals of laughter until I was afraid that she would fall out of the tree.

"Mamma said for you to come early," she went on, as soon as she could get her breath. "I think we'd better start now."

It is bad enough to have Calamity Anderson chase you and to tear your trousers climbing a tree, without being laughed at by a girl. It made me sort of mad.

"I didn't see anything to laugh at," I told her.

"You didn't stop to look," she said, and then she laughed again so hard that I had to laugh, too.

"You will have to excuse me for smiling," she went on, "but it was too funny for anything. I mean that it is funny now that you are safe; it was awful when it was happening. It was real good of you to try to save me, anyhow. You made an awful racket. It almost scared the bull."

"We have only commenced to fight," Skinny told her, like Paul Jones said to the commander of the *Serapis* that time. "I'm going to lasso the

critter. That's what I brought my rope up the tree for. You can't lasso a bull from the ground worth a cent. They don't stand still long enough. I lassoed a bear once from a tree. It was great. Say, he was mad. I——"

Just then we heard a man's voice call, "Hello, over there. What is all that yelling? Is there any trouble?"

"You bet there is," Skinny shouted back. "There has been a terrible Calamity."

"A what," said the voice again, as some men crashed through the underbrush to the edge of the ravine. "A calamity? Is someone—— Oh!"

"Did he hurt anybody?" he called.

"He didn't," I told him, "but it wasn't his fault; he wanted to and he tried hard enough."

The men had pitchforks and it didn't take them long to drive the bull away.

"It's a wonder that some of you were not killed," Mr. Anderson told us, after we had climbed down. "That is the fiercest bull that I ever saw. I'll keep him tied up after this as long as you remain in camp. It will be easier to tie him than to tie a lot

of boys and I am not going to take any more chances."

"We are much obliged to you," said Skinny, "and it was a good thing for Calamity that you came when you did. I was just going to lasso him. That's the way to do it. Climb a tree and lasso 'em and you always want to carry a rope. Once I climbed a tree and lassoed a bear. He didn't like it very well."

"Well, there is no accounting for tastes. Some like one thing and some another. Now, you'd better clear out while the going is good."

"Listen, boys," said Alice, after we had reached the road. "That invitation still holds good. We're going to have berries with ice cream on them. It's too bad that Bill doesn't like ice cream."

Bill stood on his hands and kicked both feet in the air.

"Great snakes!" said he. "Berries and ice cream! Gee, but I'm glad that I came."

CHAPTER VIII

A FLINT LAKE BEACH PARTY

WHEN we got to the cottage we found Mrs. Laurence looking for us and wondering what was keeping Alice so long. She saw us from the porch just as we were coming out of the woods, and waved a flag. We waved back and broke into a run.

"I was afraid that something had happened," she said, meeting us part way. "Alice promised to hurry back."

"Didn't you see us coming on a run?" I told her.

"How could anything happen, mamma?" said Alice. "Skinny was along with his rope."

"There couldn't possibly," laughed Mrs. Laurence. "You always ought to carry a rope." Then, seeing that Skinny was getting fussed, she went on, "I am never afraid of your getting into trouble when Captain Miller is along, whether he has a

rope or not. I haven't forgotten when that rope, or one like it, saved my little girl from a terrible death."

Skinny swelled up over that and so did we all, because Mrs. Laurence had given us a look which showed that she meant all of us.

"You bet we'll take care of Alice," said he, "every day in the week and every time. That is what Boy Scouts are for, to do good deeds and rescue maidens in distress."

"Especially maidens?"

"Well—er—why not? We couldn't have gone away without rescuing Alice from Calamity, could we, and be good Scouts, even if we hadn't known her and liked her?"

"And liked her mother," put in Benny.

Benny is foxy, all right. She gave him a look that I knew was good for an extra dish of ice cream.

"You haven't been rescuing Alice again, have you?" she asked, beginning to get scared.

"Well, the other fellers did as much as I did," Skinny told her, "but it was lucky for Calamity

that the men came just when they did. I was getting my rope ready."

"Alice Laurence," said she, turning to Alice, who was chewing the corner of her handkerchief to keep from laughing, "tell me what has happened and tell me immediately. What is all this about a calamity?"

So we had to tell her. When we had finished, Mrs. Laurence grabbed Alice and hugged her and beamed on us boys, until we began to think that we had done something great.

"I have asked Mr. Norton to come over to supper," she said, finally. "I guess home cooking will taste good to him after a few days of camp life, even if you are Boy Scouts and are supposed to know how to boil an egg. Some of the girls who are stopping along the shore are coming over this afternoon. We will have all kinds of fun, ending with a marshmallow roast on the beach this evening."

"Three caws for Mrs. Laurence," shouted Skinny, and when we had given them until it sounded like a flock of crazy crows, he said:

"Now, you fellers get busy. If we roast marsh-

mallows we'll need a fire, and it takes wood to make a fire."

"You will not need much wood; just red-hot coals."

"It will be fun to have one, anyhow, and tell stories, while it drives the dark away. That is the way we do at camp and Mr. Norton tells us a lot of things."

I don't believe that we ever had more fun than we did that afternoon and evening. First, we went into the woods and along the shore, picking up a big pile of wood ready for the fire. By that time we saw a bunch of girls coming down the beach from one of the cottages. It made us feel anxious because girls are different from boys and you never know what to say to them, or what they will do next.

"Gee!" said Skinny, looking at his Scout suit. "They are all dolled up, and gaze on us!"

"You boys are all right in your suits," Mrs. Laurence told him. "And let me say that you know very little about girls if you don't know that they are always attracted to a uniform. If you

happen to be inside the uniform, so much the better for you. Come in and wash off some of the dirt that you accumulated during your little trouble with Calamity and you will look well enough."

When we went out again with our faces shining and our hair combed, the girls were all on the front porch. They pretended not to see us when we came out and went on talking and pointing out on the lake, but they couldn't help seeing us; we knew that. You can't fool us that way.

Alice saw us, all right, and came toward us.

"Mr. Miller," said she, "I want you to meet some of my friends. This is——"

"Go on, you boob," I said to Skinny, giving him a shove. He was looking around to see who Mr. Miller was.

He turned as red as a beet and looked scared, for he wasn't used to being called mister and thought she was speaking to somebody else.

Then Alice grabbed him by one hand and dragged him forward.

"Girls," said she, laughing, "I made a mistake. This isn't Mr. Miller at all. It is just Skinny. And,

say, you ought to see him climb a tree when he is in a hurry."

We knew from the way the girls laughed that Alice had been telling them about Calamity, and Skinny knew it, too. He didn't know what to do or say, until one of the girls who was back of the others, leaning against the porch railing, called out under her breath, as if she didn't mean for us boys to hear:

"Oh, Skin-nay, come on over."

Skinny heard her and she didn't have to say it twice.

Then the rest of us were introduced and Alice told them again all about Calamity and what had happened when we tried to rescue her.

Late in the afternoon, Mr. Norton came and brought our bathing suits; then we had a romp in the water. It was great fun.

"Now, girls," said Mrs. Laurence, after we had dressed and were feeling fine and cool, "suppose that you help me get supper. We'll show these Boy Scouts a thing or two and I guess that they will be glad to eat someone else's cooking. I'd hate to

eat their cooking all the time and I like Boy Scouts, too."

"Pedro," said Skinny to me after they had gone into the house, "it's a funny thing how much better girls are than they used to be when we were young. I didn't like them then. They were always getting in the way when a feller wanted to have a good time. But, somehow, these girls seem different. The more they get in the way, the better you like it."

Supper was served on the porch, overlooking the lake. A cool breeze swept across and stirred the water. Voices and laughter floated over from cottages on the other side and boats moved lazily here and there, or waited for fishes that didn't bite. It seemed as if the whole world was resting or playing, with nothing to do except to eat and have fun.

Say, just bread and butter at a time like that, when you are hungry and feel good clear through, taste better than mince pie and plum pudding on Christmas!

"Benjamin Wade," exclaimed Mr. Norton, after Mrs. Laurence had heaped up his dish for the third

time with ice cream and berries, "where are you going to put it?"

Benny gave a sigh of happiness. "I guess that if you'd been chased by a bull and had been in four boat races and a swimming match and other things, maybe you'd 'a' been empty, too."

"Don't you dare leave a single mouthful, Benny," Mrs. Laurence told him. And he didn't.

Flint Lake at night is worth seeing. First, the sun sinks down back of the woods, turning the water to crimson and gold. Everyone who likes to fish gets out his boat and goes floating around in the gold, casting for bass. Slowly, it grows darker, until the woods are all in the shadow, but still the lake reflects back the light and we can see the fishermen rowing toward shore, while across the water come happy voices and, maybe, the barking of a dog. It makes you wish it would stay that way always, only you would be mad if it did.

We lighted the fire when it began to grow dark. The pile made a great blaze and the heat drove us away at first; but when only red-hot coals were left, we gathered around with marshmallows on

the ends of pointed sticks and toasted them over the coals except when they fell off into the fire and burned.

Afterward we sat around in a circle and told the girls all about Bob's Hill and the twin stones and Peck's Falls and our cave, until it made them wish that they were boys, too. Girls can have fun sometimes, but it's great to be a boy in summer, with all out of doors to play in.

The time went so fast that it seemed only a few minutes when, after a little whispering together, the girls said that they would have to go home.

"I declare, it is getting late," exclaimed Mr. Norton, holding his watch close to what was left of the fire so that he could see. "These boys of mine will have to turn in pretty soon, too. I'll wait here while you fellows see the girls safe home; then we'll make a beeline for camp. I think that before we go we'd better line up and give Mrs. Laurence the Scout salute. We certainly have had an evening which we shall not soon forget."

"I owe these boys much," she said, after we had saluted. "They have done for me more than I

possibly can do for them. I wondered at first how their folks could let them go so far from home. Now that I have become acquainted with their Scoutmaster, I think I understand."

"The secretary will put that in the minutes of the meetin'," cried Skinny, springing to his feet. Then he folded his arms like a bandit and stood there, while we all waited.

"Mr. Norton is great stuff," said he, "and so is the whole Laurence family. I have spoken."

I tell you it surprised the girls some, when Skinny said that.

"The whole two of us," said Mrs. Laurence, laughing, "will try to be worthy of such high praise."

"Wait a minute before you go," said Alice, when we were getting ready to start. "Will you do something for me, Bill?"

"Betcher life I will."

"I want the girls to hear you holler. You are the awfulest yeller that I ever heard."

"Oh, say, Alice! I don't want to do that," he said, bashful-like. "Cut it out, can't you?"

"Please do," the girls all teased. "We never heard you."

"Go ahead, Bill," Skinny told him. "Yell for the ladies. We can stand it."

"Well," said Bill, "I don't feel much like it, but I'll do my best."

Bill's best is a lot. He stood on his hands before the fire and when he had balanced himself and taken some deep breaths, began.

Say, it was awful, and I'd heard Bill many times before. It sounded as if somebody was getting killed. Mrs. Laurence clapped her hands to her ears and all up and down the lake we could hear folks running out of their cottages to find out what the matter was. It made us all feel proud. Bill yelled so hard that he almost fell into the fire; then he picked himself up and stood there with folded arms, looking around, like Skinny did.

"I have spoken," said he.

We started down the shore with the girls toward the other cottages, laughing and talking, making fun of Bill, and planning some more beach parties. Then, just as we were passing through a lonely

spot, we heard a pistol shot farther down the shore and the noise of somebody running. They were coming our way.

It was scary that time of night, not knowing what it was about. We didn't like to go on and were ashamed to turn back, when the girls were with us. They were scared, too. All the time we could hear the footsteps of the running men coming nearer.

We waited a minute and then, when we saw them coming out of the dark, two of them on a jump, without a word, girls and all, we turned and broke for the bushes.

"Halt!" cried one of the men, and as he spoke he fired a revolver. "Halt, or I'll shoot."

"Great snakes!" whispered Bill to himself. "I wish I hadn't come."

"Quick! Lie down behind us," said Skinny to the girls. "Now, fellers, line up and show 'em what Scouts are made of. When I say 'Charge!' give 'em Bunker Hill."

I could see him wetting his lips with his tongue, but he stood there, just the same, and faced them.

It made us all feel brave and we lined up by his side and faced them, ready to charge.

"Shucks! It's nothin' but a passel of boys," said one of the men, when he had come closer. "And girls," he added, catching sight of the dresses.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

"We're taking these girls home. We've had a party," Skinny told him.

"There is somebody being murdered up there," said he, pointing down the beach in the direction we had come from. "Do you know anything about it? Didn't you hear the yelling?"

"Fellers," said Skinny, turning to us, "did you hear anybody holler?"

"I thought I heard something," said Bill, "but I didn't see anybody doing it."

Then we hurried on; but the man looked after us and shook his head, as if he didn't quite understand it.

"Times have changed, Lew," said he, "since we were kids."

CHAPTER IX

FISHING FOR BASS

“**B**OYS,” said Mr. Norton, one morning when we were eating breakfast, “do you remember the queer-shaped lake which you discovered back there in the woods?”

“Do you mean the one that looks like a pair of spectacles?” I asked.

“That’s the one, or the two, according to how you look at the matter. It is called Spectacle Lake on account of its shape.”

“I know the place,” Skinny told him. “Bill and I were up there day before yesterday. The fish were jumping all around, but they won’t let us catch them. Somebody owns it. Whoever heard of a lake belonging to anybody?”

“Well, I have some news. I met the owner yesterday and he proved to be a very fine man. Anyhow, he told me that we might have a day of fishing

in the lake any time we wanted to, if we would be good. How would you like to go to-day?"

That sounded good to us and he knew it from the noise we made.

"We've got some huckleberry customers," I told him. "Who will look after them?"

"Get right after the berries the first thing this morning, and we will fish this afternoon and evening. I am going to have a try at the black bass and this time of the year they bite better in the cool of the morning or evening."

"We caught a four-pound bass once in Illinois River," said Benny. "It was fun."

"They are a fine fish and full of fight. I don't believe there is a gamier fish anywhere than the black bass and they grow as large as seven pounds sometimes. There was a seven-pound bass caught in Flint Lake earlier in the season, but I haven't had any luck so far, although I have not had much time to fish until now."

When we all met again at dinner time, Mr. Norton, who had been down to the city, brought with

him a queer-looking bundle and wouldn't tell us what it was.

"You'll see when the time comes," said he.

About two o'clock we rowed our boats up to Lake View and left them. Then, carrying a lunch basket and fishing tackle, we went up the bluff and through the woods.

There is quite a high bluff overlooking Long Lake on the west, near the south end. The top is so high above the water that you wouldn't expect to find another lake anywhere around. Just the same, if you go back through the woods toward the southwest and across a pasture, after a while you will come to the highest spot around there. From there the ground slopes down to the queerest little lake that you ever saw.

It is really two lakes, twins, both small and connected by a curved channel. The two lakes are the eyes of the spectacles and the channel is the part that rests on the nose. Growing entirely around the lakes to a distance of ten to fifteen feet from the shore was a weed with big leaves, which Mr. Norton called spatterdock.

"Do you see those weeds?" he asked, pointing them out.

We told him that we thought they spoiled the lake.

"They do, do they?" said he. "That depends on what use you want to make of the lake. A growth of spatterdock like that is an ideal feeding place for bass and a little later in the day I'll try to land a few. Meanwhile, you boys can get busy and have all the fun you want to with your still-fishing. I'll lie around in the shade and watch you."

We found a couple of old boats drawn up on the shore among the weeds and it didn't take us long to push out and throw in our hooks, baited with angleworms.

There is something about fishing that makes a boy feel good all over. Perhaps a part of it comes from being out of doors, with woods nearby and lake or river sparkling in the sunshine and reflecting back trees and bushes and every reed along the shore. All kinds of birds fly around in the air above you, chasing insects and, maybe, wondering

what kind of big insect you are, sitting there so still by the water. A gentle breeze fans you and brings with it the smell of woods and of meadow flowers, growing grass, and weeds. School seems a long way off and there is no work to be done, like filling woodboxes and things like that, except work that is fun.

You sit there in the boat or along the shore, soaking in the sunshine and wildness and beauty of it all and you think that this time, sure, you are going to catch the grandfather of all the fishes. Suddenly, comes a tug at your fish line. Gee, it sends a funny feeling all through you and sets every drop of blood in your body to dancing and you suddenly stiffen all over with the excitement of it.

Then comes another tug and another. Three nibbles make a bite, and you pull in. "Gee whizz!" you think, "here comes a whale. When it comes to fishing I'm the Willie-boy." Then a little sunfish sails through the air over your head and falls flopping in the grass at your feet. It's all right, anyhow. Maybe you will get the big one next time. Then you do it all over again.

For more than an hour we pulled in the little golden fellows, until we had enough for supper and then some, and were ready to go in to shore for a time.

We found Mr. Norton undoing the package which we had asked him about and stopped to watch him. He took out several torches like those they carry in torchlight processions and stuck them in the ground at the edge of the water.

"We'll have some fun to-night," he said. "We can cook our fish and eat supper here and then go after bullheads. These torches when lighted at night will attract bullheads and they will bite like sixty.

"The bullhead is a good fish to eat," he went on, "almost as delicious as brook trout, caught in the mountain streams at home, and it doesn't seem to have as many bones as other fish. There is more fun catching trout, though, for the bullhead does not put up much of a fight when hooked. It is a lazy fish, burrowing in the mud at the bottom of the lake.

"Can any of you tell me how it differs from other fish? What do you say, Skinny?"

"They haven't any scales, for one thing."

"That is right. Most fish have scales, but the bullhead has not, and must be skinned before eaten. He is a sort of cousin to the catfish, which is found in the Mississippi River and some of its tributaries, and sometimes weighs as much as one hundred pounds. The bullhead is one of the hardiest fish known."

"They can sting you, too," Bill told him. "One stung me once when I was taking him off the hook. Gee, it hurt."

"Yes, its fins are very sharp and there is a needle-like projection on each side of its mouth."

"Say, Mr. Norton," Benny asked; "does it hurt the fish any to catch them?"

"I do not imagine that they exactly enjoy it, especially when they swallow the bait and the bullhead nearly always does that, but there are no nerves in a fish's mouth and he probably feels no pain. That is why a game fish, like a trout, bass, or

pickerel, is able to fight so hard. If it hurt him, he couldn't do it."

"Tell us some more about fish," said Hank, after Mr. Norton had finished fixing his torches and putting out some throw lines.

"Wait until we have cooked these fellows and had supper. I am hungry and it is barely possible that you boys feel the same. How about it, Skinny?"

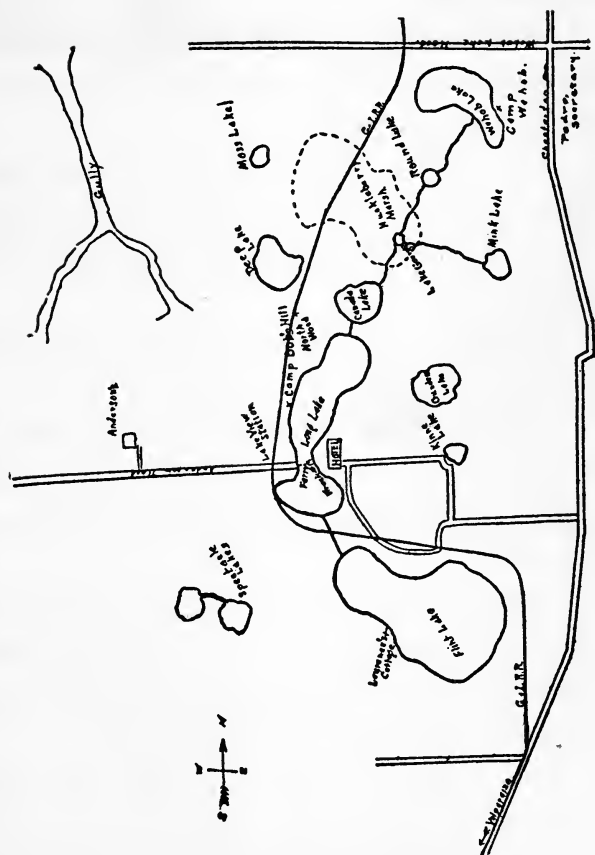
But Skinny was too busy to answer. He was building a fire.

"Now, I'll tell you all I know," said Mr. Norton, after we had eaten supper, "and it will not take me long, for like most people, I know very little about the subject——"

"Wait," called out Skinny, before he could go on. "Pedro, you put this in the minutes of the meeting. It's important, and can't you draw a map of the lakes and put it in, too?"

"I don't know," I told him, "I ain't much on the draw."

"Yes, you are, too. You drew a good picture of the places around Bob's Hill and Peck's Falls.



Everybody that wants Pedro to draw a picture and put it in the minutes of the meeting," he said, pounding on a stone with the head of his hatchet, "say aye."

"You're scaring all the fish," Bill grumbled, when the boys said aye, loud enough to be heard in Chesterton.

That settled it. I had to draw the map. It doesn't look just right, somehow, but it will sort of show where the different places are.

"Mr. Chairman, is it safe to go on now?" asked Mr. Norton.

"It is," said he, "I have spoken."

"I don't suppose that one person out of fifty of the men and boys who go fishing have any knowledge of the habits of the fish they angle for, their sense of hearing, of seeing or smelling, the way they live, their choice of foods, or their likes and dislikes generally. It takes a great deal of study to learn all about those things, but I imagine that to be a real successful fisherman one must have that knowledge. You will find it the same in business, when you grow older. Business is very much like

fishing. You must have the right bait and throw it where the customers are and in the right way, or the other fellow will pull them in."

"I didn't know that fish could smell," said Benny.

"Yes, their sense of taste is very limited but that of smell is very keen. Some odors attract them and some repel. They will pay no attention to bait that is spoiled and does not smell right. They can hear, too, and they not only can hear sounds but in some way they seem to feel them. On that account you should be very quiet when fishing and drop your bait into the water with as little noise as possible and Bill should refrain from giving any of his justly celebrated yells."

"How about seeing?"

"They can see, all right," said Skinny. "You don't ever want to wear a straw hat when you are fishing."

"Yes, they can see. Their sense of sight is very acute, but their eyes are so fixed at the top of their heads that they cannot see much below them. They readily can see out of the water above them and, if the water is clear, from fifty to sixty feet on

each side. For that reason they quickly detect unnatural bait. Most of them live on smaller fish, insects, and the like, and in game fishing you must make your bait look very lifelike or they will not touch it. In casting, one should keep out of sight as much as possible and sit with the sun facing him, so that no shadow will fall in the water.

“When I get through answering your questions I am going to leave you boys here on the shore, except one to row the boat, and will try my luck at casting. There is real sport in casting. Of course, still-fishing is fun, too, especially for boys, but it doesn't give the fish any show for his money, so to speak. He doesn't have a chance. He bites the hook and you pull him out. That is all there is to it. But in casting, you put your skill and cunning against those of the fish and, if you are not very careful, he will get away. The real sport comes after you have hooked your fish.”

“How are you going to get your minnows?”

“I am going to use what is called an artificial minnow. Here it is. It is made of wood and when pulled through the water in a certain way looks

enough like a live minnow to deceive a hungry bass. You see there are hooks on the sides and hooks behind. The tail hooks usually are all that are necessary. In feeding, a bass grabs a minnow from below and by the tail, so that the minnow will not see him coming. Then, as quick as lightning, he turns him around in his mouth and swallows him head first."

"What is that for?" asked Dick. "Why does he turn him around?"

"Because he cannot swallow him tail first. The fins would catch and keep the fish from going down. Big fish prefer solitude and usually will be found in the cooler and deeper parts of the lake. In casting, drop your bait into the deeper places and those which are the very hardest to get at. Early in the morning, or in the evening, or even at night, is the best time.

"The cloudier it is, the better, and this is especially true just before a storm, when a slight breeze is stirring the surface of the water. The fish seem unusually active then. But do not fish after a storm, as the rain always washes a quantity of food

into the water, which the fish will prefer to your bait.

“Casting is an art. It looks easy, but to place your minnow within a few inches of the spatterdock, without having the hooks catch in the weeds and without making too big a splash, is quite an accomplishment. If you do it just right and a fish is attracted by the bait, he will strike from below and behind and then will try to turn the bait in his mouth. To his surprise he will find that he is hooked. First he will tug and tug, trying to get loose; then he will make for deep water, only to return to the surface, from which he will jump into the air and shake the minnow in much the same way as a terrier shakes a rat.

“The best way to land a bass, I have found, is to allow him plenty of line and keep it tight all the time. Gradually the fish will tire and finally drown, or nearly drown, so that in lifting him out of the water there will be less danger of losing him.”

“You didn’t mean drown, did you? Fish can’t drown.”

“Surely a fish can drown. It has to have air

just as we do, but breathes it in a different way, taking it out of the water. Fly-casting is the most difficult of all. This consists of trailing along the surface of the water flies, grasshoppers, or other choice morsels in a way to make the fish think they are alive. When the fly looks good to Mr. Fish he darts up, grabs it, and rushes away with great rapidity. Then is when you want to look out for your line. The fun is all in landing him, for as the trout feels no pain in his mouth, he is free to use his strength and his breathing facilities in a fight to get free and, let me tell you, he is some fighter. It takes great skill properly to cast your bait into the water, trail it in a life-like manner, and then to land your fish.

“The Chinese have a way of snagging fish that could be used successfully in these lakes, only it would be against the law. They cut a stout cord into lengths, depending upon the depth of the water. On these pieces of cord they tie hooks at regular distances and suspend the cords from a wire, or rope, in the stream. In swimming around the fish get snagged or hooked and the more they

fight to get loose the more securely they are fastened. When I was a boy we used to catch bass in a way that is not allowed now by law. We took large bottles, corked them tight, and let them float on the water, each one carrying a fish line, baited with a live frog. We caught a lot of them that way.

“Now you know all about it,” he went on, after a moment, “and I am not going to answer another question. Come on, Skinny, you are patrol leader. The boys will let you go first. Let’s show them that we are real fishermen.”

“I’ll tell you what I’ll do,” said he, after he had pushed out beyond the weeds. “Just to show you that I am a good Scout, I’ll let you catch the first fish, if you can. I will show you how to cast; then you can go after the big fellows.”

Skinny practiced a few minutes, throwing out the bait and reeling it in, just like Mr. Norton told him, but without getting any bites. Then they moved the boat over into the other lake and stopped quietly about twenty feet from the edge of the spatterdock.

"Now go to it."

Skinny ran his tongue out to make sure of a good one and gave his pole a little flirt.

"Too far," groaned Bill.

It did seem that way, for the wooden minnow fell on a dock leaf, rested there a moment, then dropped off into the water with a gentle splash as if a small fish had jumped into the air and dropped back again. Then I hear Skinny say, "Gee-whili-kins!" and the reel fairly sang as it whizzed around, letting out the line.

Splash went the water, twenty feet or more away, as a big fish leaped into the air, shaking at the bait to beat the band, and fell back.

"Great snakes!" shouted Bill. "Hold on to him, Skinny. You've got a whale."

"Steady," Mr. Norton was saying, nearly as excited as we were. "Reel him in. Whoa-up. If you let him get in among the docks, it is good night."

Finally we saw him reach down suddenly into the water and in another moment held up a whopping big black bass for us to see.

"Three pounds and a half if he weighs an ounce!" he exclaimed. "Good boy. Now give your Uncle Dudley a chance."

Say, it was great fun. Mr. Norton caught two or three; then he let the rest of us try and we caught several more, but none as large as Skinny's. After dark we lighted the torches and caught bullheads until we were tired, but it seemed tame after the bass.

"That will do for one day," said Mr. Norton, finally. "If the owner turns us loose here very often he will have to restock his lakes. As it is, we have had some mighty good sport. We'll have a fine breakfast in the morning and there will be enough fish for your friends, the Laurences."

CHAPTER X

AMONG THE SAND DUNES

ONE of the best places for having fun which we found, except on the lakes, of course, was a place on the edge of some woods, called Mineral Springs. It is a little north of Wahob Lake. Under a big tree, there is one spot where the water fairly boils out of the ground and then runs off through the fields and woods in quite a big stream.

That spring broke out all of a sudden, someone told us. When it happened, it sent the dirt high up in the air and made a great roar. A farmer was plowing in a field nearby and it scared him half to death. The water is cold, even on hot summer days, and has a taste like iron, but is good to drink, just the same.

We often played our Scout games around there and sent up smoke signals from "Mount Moriah."

Mt. Moriah isn't a mountain at all; it is only a little hill. We wouldn't look twice at it if Greylock Mountain was anywhere near, or Bob's Hill, either. But Greylock and Bob's Hill were a long way off, so Mt. Moriah looked good to us. From the top of it we could see all around except where trees hid the view.

Bill, Benny, and I were on top of the hill, one day, looking off toward the north and wishing that we could see Bob's Hill over there somewhere. Instead of that, we could see a lot of hills, which are called sand dunes, looking almost like a low range of mountains. Some of them have names like mountains. Their sandy tops and sides glistened in the sun and we played that they were snow-capped peaks.

"Great snakes!" said Bill. "Those dunes look good to me. Let's go over there and explore. I don't believe it is so very far. We'll play that we are Christopher Columbus, or some guy like that."

"Let's not go now," I told him. "It's too near dinner time. I can tell by the feeling. Besides, the

other boys will want to go, too, and, maybe, Mr. Norton."

Just then we turned around and looked toward our camp, which was hidden among the trees south of us. A column of smoke was going up out of the woods.

"Injuns!" yelled Benny. "Come on. Let's surround them."

Before we could start the column broke into long and short puffs of smoke, and we knew that it was the other boys at the camp signaling to us.

Signaling that way is great fun when you know how and every Boy Scout has to know how. The Morse alphabet is used, the same that is used in telegraphing. We signal with flags, too, sometimes, but we like smoke signals better because we can see them so far off. Once, at home, when Bill was up on Greylock with a sprained ankle and no one knew where he was except himself, and he didn't know whether he ever could get down or not, he signaled for help and we saw the smoke, away down in the valley, and could tell what he said.

The Morse letters are made by dots and dashes,

or by sounds which the telegraph instrument makes that mean dots and dashes. Instead of sounds, we use puffs of smoke, a long one for a dash and a short one for a dot. The Boy Scouts' Manual tells how to do it. First you make a fire that smokes like sixty; then have a boy take hold of each end of the blanket and hold it over the fire for a moment. When you take the blanket away, the smoke will go up in a puff. You can make the puffs long or short, as you like.

We couldn't tell at first what the boys were trying to say, but pretty soon the smoke grew thicker and we began to spell out the letters. First there was one short puff all alone.

"E," said Bill.

Then came a short puff, followed by a long one.

"A," shouted Benny.

Pretty soon we saw a long puff go up all alone, which meant T.

"Eat," we all said together. We thought that was all of it and that when the smoke started again, it would repeat the same word. Sure enough, a short puff went up. In a moment, however, there

was another puff and then a third. Then we knew the full word and the message.

. E
. - A
- T
. . . S

"I guess that is the dinner bell," said Bill. "I can 'most smell the bacon frying."

We didn't have anything to build a fire with, so we couldn't signal back, and we didn't want to take the time. They couldn't have seen the smoke, anyhow, from where they were. We hurried back and in a little while reached camp.

Mr. Norton was eating when we marched up with Bill at the head.

"Boys," said he, "I have been called away again and wanted you here before leaving. Is there any reason why I should not go?"

"There is," said Skinny.

"Well, let's hear the reason."

"You promised to go fishing with us."

"If that is all, I think that I'll have to leave.

The fishing will keep and my appointment will not. I may be able to get back on a late train. What are your plans for this afternoon?"

"Bill and I want to walk over to the sand dunes," I told him, "if the rest of the boys will go."

"I have wanted to go with you on that trip. Still, you can go again; they are worth seeing twice. I imagine that those sand dunes are unlike anything else in America. People who are experts in botany, so I have been told, find them a rich field for exploration. They have found nearly everything in the way of plant life there from the orchid to the cactus. You'd better take a car to Chesterton and walk from there. It is farther over to the dunes than it seems. Look up a time-table, so that you can take a train back from Dune Park to Chesterton in case you should be too tired to walk."

Some people go crazy over the sand dunes, as Mr. Norton said, but we didn't. We had a lot of fun, though, and some things that were a long way from fun. Say! No more sand dunes for us.

Wild! We thought it was wild among the mountains at the east end of Hoosac Tunnel, and so it

was, but in a different way. There, it was mostly rocks and trees. Here, it was all sand, even where trees were growing. We couldn't understand what made them grow in such a place. We came upon valleys, between the hills, where there wasn't a tree of any kind, or a blade of grass, even; nothing but sand, swept by the wind and packed down in little scallops, like ripples on the water.

We met a man on the way who told us all about them. He said that once, not long ago, criminals from Chicago, when the police got after them, would chase out into the sand dunes and hide and it was almost impossible to find them. That was before the city of Gary was built in one of the wildest parts. Right under where one of the big mills in Gary now stands, he told us, there used to be a cave, and some real bandits were caught there by the police. It made us feel scary. We found a lot of tracks; some so big that they looked as if a herd of elephants might have gone through there.

"Bears," shouted Skinny. "It's lucky that I brought my rope along."

We followed the bear tracks until we happened to look at our own tracks on the side hills and found that they looked about the same. The sand was soft and loose and rolled down, almost filling our tracks, giving them a queer look.

"Bears, nothin'!" said Bill. "It's Injuns. I 'most know it is. Let's climb that big hill over there and maybe we can see their smoke."

"I think they are bandits," said Benny, looking around as if he was afraid they might be back of him. "Not bandits like us, but the real thing. There is probably a cave somewhere around here, where they hide, just like the man said."

You couldn't blame him any for feeling that way, for it was scary to see the tracks there, where it looked as if there would not be people within a thousand miles.

When Benny said that, it made us all nervous except Bill. He didn't seem to think what it would be to meet bandits in a place like that. Before we could stop him, he opened his mouth and gave a terrible yell.

At the first sound every one of us made for a clump of trees, Bill chasing after.

"Now you've gone and done it," Skinny told him. "They'll know just where to look for us."

"But they won't know what it is," I said. "Bill's holler don't sound like anything anybody ever heard before."

"Well, if they catch me," said Bill, "they'll have to go some."

With that he started for the hill on a run, we after him. But there was no running up the hill. It was all fine sand, without a stick or stone or bush. It was one of the snow-capped mountains that we saw from Mt. Moriah, only now it looked like a hill of brown sugar. At every step we sank in the sugar to our shoe tops and the sugar from above would slide down toward us.

Climbing was hard work and it seemed as if the whole hill would slide down on us, but, after a time, we scrambled over a sharp edge of sand which the wind had made at the top. Then we forgot all about bandits and Indians and everything else except what we saw, for there in front of us, stretch-

ing north as far as we could see, like a great ocean, was Lake Michigan. Away in the distance, so far that it was out of sight behind the curve of the earth, we knew that there must be a steamboat, for we could see its smoke seeming to come out of the water.

I saw the ocean once at Nantasket Beach, near Boston, and it wasn't so very different except that the waves which rolled in and broke on the beach were higher and the air had a smell of salt.

When we saw it, we started for the shore on a run. It was great, playing around there, with gulls soaring overhead, sandpipers running along the beach, waves rolling in and breaking, with a soft roaring, and no sign that anybody ever had been there before.

"I'll be the first one in swimming," shouted Benny, making a grab at his clothes.

He was, too, but the rest of us were not far behind and soon were out in the cool water, splashing around like so many fish. Then, just as we were having the most fun of all, playing that we

were saving one of the boys from drowning, we heard some guns, sounding like a battle.

"Gee, fellers!" said Skinny, treading water. "Did you hear it? I'll bet that was Benny's bandits."

"Or Injuns," said Bill, spouting water like a whale. He was swimming for shore so fast that he swallowed a part of the lake.

It was a race to see who would get out first, and Bill beat, but we all struck the beach at about the same time. Then came some more yells, sounding nearer, and a lot of shooting.

That was enough for us. We grabbed our clothes and made a run for the sand hills. We didn't stop until we were out of sight from the lake and wouldn't have stopped then if we hadn't been out of breath. Then we dressed and tried to decide what to do. The shooting had stopped and somehow we were not so scared with our clothes on. Some of the boys wanted to go home, but Skinny said that he didn't believe in running from the enemy.

"Either it is something, or it isn't," he told us.

He waited a moment, but nobody said anything. There wasn't anything to say. Then he went on:

"If it isn't anything it won't hurt us any; will it? And if it is something, a fight or something like that, why, we're Boy Scouts, ain't we? And betcher life Boy Scouts don't do much running. That's all I've got to say, except that Gabe Miller has got his rope and he's got his gang, and, Injun or no Injun and bandit or no bandit, he's going to the rescue. Say, they'll know who's around before we get through with them and don't you forget it."

"That's the stuff!" cried Bill. "We can creep up behind them through the woods; then charge down on 'em from the hills."

"'Tention, Scouts!" yelled Skinny. "Everybody get a club. Forward, and mum's the word!"

With Skinny leading the way, carrying his rope and swinging his hatchet, Bill close behind, going through all the motions of yelling but making no sound, and the others scattered along, we started across the dunes toward the place where we had heard the shooting.

It was great fun, up hill and down, through

clumps of stunted trees and underbrush, plowing through sand, climbing great heaps of brown sugar, crossing wind-swept plains, as bare of trees and grass and stones as the desert the school reader tells about.

We almost forgot about the bandits and played that we were explorers. Harry wanted to play Columbus and discover America, but we told him that Columbus didn't discover any desert. He landed on a tropical island, one of the West Indies.

"San Salvador," said Skinny; "I read it in a book."

Benny wanted to be Balboa and discover the Pacific Ocean, but Bill told him that Balboa had his dog along and that we were all out of dogs.

"I read it in a book," said he, winking at me.

Hank wanted to be an Arab and speed over the trackless desert on his trusty camel, but nobody would be the camel.

"Let's be What's-his-name," I said, "the guy who explored Mexico and conquered the Aztec Indians. It will be more fun than enlisting."

"Who was it?" Benny asked. "It's so long

since I went to school that I've forgotten his name."

Just then the name came to me. "Cortez," I told him, "Hernando Cortez."

All this time we had been climbing through the sand. Skinny was just saying, "We take possession of this country in the name of the king of Spain," when we heard some awful yells and this time they came from the other side of the hill which we were climbing.

"Great snakes!" whispered Bill. "I wish I hadn't come."

We all turned to run and did run to the bottom of the hill. Then we stopped; Skinny began to loosen his rope, and I knew that he was thinking about the Boy Scout business. Then he waved his hatchet and beckoned us forward. Back up the hill we climbed but we were careful not to speak. In the soft sand our footsteps made no sound.

When Skinny was almost at the top, he threw himself on his face and began to wriggle upward, motioning for us to do the same. Silently, like snakes, we slowly made our way to the top and

over the ridge of sand, which the wind had formed there, and so out upon the narrow summit, from which we all knew that we would be able to see the valley on the other side.

Skinny was the first over. As he looked, I saw him give one backward spring, fall, and then go rolling down the hill of sand. Then, as we looked over the edge, there came a terrible roar that seemed to make the sand hill tremble and an answering roar from a little beyond.

I could feel the blood leave my face and my breath came in gasps. You needn't believe me if you don't want to, but it is true, just the same. There in a little valley, surrounded by sand hills, were two lions, fighting with a wild man! During the second in which we looked, we saw it all and never will be able to forget it,—the great lions, crouching for a spring, and the wild man, dressed in skins, with hair all over his face and hanging down his back, uttering strange cries.

CHAPTER XI

SOME ASTONISHING ADVENTURES

THE Boy Scouts of Raven Patrol don't scare easily, but when you see lions roaring around where there oughtn't to be anything bigger than rabbits, it is time to be scared and it is time to run, Boy Scouts or no Boy Scouts. We didn't stop to see any more. In another second we all were rolling and tumbling and panting down the hill after Skinny; then were off at full speed across the dunes, and all the time those awful roars were sounding in our ears and we were expecting every minute to be grabbed by a lion from behind.

Nobody said a word. There wasn't time and we didn't have any breath to spare, for running through the sand was hard work. We didn't know where we were going and we didn't care. All we wanted was to get as far away from the roars as we could and as soon as we could. Bill Wilson,

who is the best runner, was ahead and Benny Wade, whose legs are shorter than ours because he isn't as old, was getting farther and farther behind.

"I'm all in, boys," he panted, finally. "I can't go much farther. Save yourselves and tell mother——"

We never knew what he wanted us to tell his mother because just then he caught his foot on a tangle of roots and down he went and lay there moaning. That brought us to our senses.

"We can't leave Benny, fellers," Skinny told us. "We must take turns carrying him. Here, Bill, you and I will be first. We'll make a chair of our hands."

"You don't need to carry me," said Benny, struggling to his feet, "but take it slower a few minutes until I can get my breath. I don't believe they are following. My side aches so I can hardly stand it."

As he spoke we heard another roar, but it came from far off and we knew that we were safe for a few minutes, anyhow.

“How about the man?” I asked, after we had gone along more slowly for a while.

I guess that we all were thinking the same thing. We had been too scared at first to think about anything else.

“He’s a goner by this time. We couldn’t help him any if we did go back.”

“Great snakes!” yelled Bill, before we could say anything more. “Here comes something else.”

We heard a noise and, looking down a sand valley, saw a lot of camels coming toward us like a whirlwind, kicking up the sand with their feet. On their backs were Arabs. We knew that they were Arabs because they looked like pictures we had seen in books. Each one carried a long gun which he shook at us, at the same time yelling something which we couldn’t understand.

We started to run again, but before we could take a dozen steps they were upon us.

Maybe you never were lost in a desert and chased by lions and Arabs. If you were not you don’t know how we felt.

With a rush they went by, leaving us trying to hide in some bushes.

“Jerusalem!” said Skinny, as soon as he could speak. “This is no place for us. They are looking for the lions and will be back in a minute. Come on.”

We hurried along, trying to find our way out of that terrible wilderness, until Hank said, finally:

“Wait a minute. I am going to climb that hill and see where we are, lion or no lion.”

He soon was at the top. Then he darted back and turned to us with such a look on his face that we all hurried up to him to see what was the matter. When we came near the top, he motioned for us to lie down and crawl. We would have done it, anyhow, for just then some shooting commenced again and it was on the other side of the hill.

“Injuns!” gasped Skinny. “We’re goners this time, sure.”

This is what we saw: Up from the lake was marching a troop of white men, some on horses and some on foot, and facing them, at the bottom of the dune on which we were standing, were sev-

eral hundred Indians. We knew that they were Indians, although they were not dressed like any Indians we had ever seen. The white men were different, too. The Indians were armed with bows and arrows; some of the white men had guns and others crossbows. They were dragging along two cannon.

"Wake me up, somebody," moaned Bill. "Great snakes!" he added in a moment. "They are going to shoot."

As he spoke, smoke came out of the guns and then we could hear the report. Soon men with crossbows shot and the Indians sent a cloud of arrows flying toward the enemy. It was a sure enough battle and Indians and white men began to fall on every side. We could see them lying there on the sand, dead, or so badly wounded that they couldn't get up.

The whites shot again and the Indians began to fall back toward us. We were so excited that we almost forgot to run, but the Indians were coming and the white men were shooting toward us and it didn't seem safe to stay.



IT WAS A SURE-ENOUGH BATTLE, AND INDIANS AND WHITE MEN
BEGAN TO FALL ON EVERY SIDE

Once more we started back across the hills as fast as we could go, but in five minutes stopped again, for there in front of us were the walls of a city and a temple. Guarding the doorway of the temple were two idols, grinning horribly, and in the doorway were more Indians.

We didn't dare go on and we couldn't go back and we didn't understand it at all, for we never had heard of a city of that kind being among the sand dunes, or anywhere in the United States.

"Fellers," said Skinny, "we're up against the real thing and I guess that we're done for. That ain't any city and those ain't Injuns. They're ghosts; that's what they are. These sand dunes are ha'nted. I read it in a book."

"Let's hide in the bushes," I told him. "They are coming on a run."

"We can hide, all right, but it won't do any good. You can't hide from ghosts. They see right through anything. They can see around a corner."

I heard one of the boys saying something about never having heard of ghosts shooting, as we were crawling into a clump of bushes. We were just in

time. Almost before we were out of sight they swept over us, yelling and shooting, but I didn't see them. I was looking at Hank and wondering if he had gone crazy.

He stood up on his feet as if he was not afraid of ghosts or anything, staring over to one side. I looked and saw a man aiming something and turning a crank.

"Hank," I called, as low as I could and make him hear. "Lie down. It's a machine gun."

"Gun, nothin'!" said he. "It's a camera; that's what it is, and we're a set of chumps. He's taking moving pictures."

It was as plain as could be all in a minute, and I wondered that we had not known it before, but seeing such things out there in the wilds was no laughing matter. We all jumped up when Hank said that and I could see that Skinny was mad.

"Hey, you!" shouted the man. "Get out of the picture."

"Moving pictures!" said Skinny, sitting down again. "Wouldn't that jar you?"

He started to unwind his rope.

"Are you going to lasso them, Skinny?" whispered Benny.

"No," he said, "but I'm going back and lasso those lions. I'll bet that they are so old they couldn't bite if they wanted to."

"Wait," said Harry. "Let's see what they are going to do. I never saw them take moving pictures before."

That is how we came to see the conquest of Mexico by Cortez, four hundred years after it really happened, and it was a queer-looking sight. It was no wonder that we were scared. We had run across a moving picture company, who had come out from Chicago to get desert pictures in the nearest thing to a desert that there is this side of Africa. The lions which had frightened us were old, as Skinny had said; besides, they had been doped with something and had no teeth, but they could roar. The wild man was an actor. The camera man had been out of sight when we looked or we should have known what it all was about in the first place.

The camels and Arabs were another desert picture and the battle between the Indians and whites

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was the conquest of Mexico. The make-believe Hernando Cortez landed on the shore of Lake Michigan, just as the real Cortez had landed on the coast of Mexico, where the city of Vera Cruz now stands. The Aztecs attacked them and would have beaten them, too, if they had not been afraid of the horses. You see, they had never seen horses before and they thought that each horse and the man on top of him was all one animal, some strange kind of monster that would eat them up. When they saw the horses come galloping toward them they ran into the city, which was afterward captured.

The city, which had been built on some high, level ground up among the dunes, was meant for the City of Mexico. It was not so far back from the lake, of course, as the real City of Mexico was from the ocean, but that didn't make any difference in taking the pictures. We saw them drag up their wooden cannon and after a fierce fight, take the city.

Maybe you will see the pictures sometime at a moving picture show: see the lions fighting with

the wild man; the camels and Arabs in the desert, and the conquest of Mexico. Then, if you have read about the doings of our patrol you will know how the pictures were taken and maybe you will be as surprised as we were to see a real desert a few miles from Chicago. But I hope that you will not be as scared as we were. It was all of a week before we began to grow again.

We were so interested in seeing the City of Mexico captured and afterwards in talking with the "Indians," who were art students from Chicago, that it began to grow dark before we even thought of going back to camp. When we did think of it, we left in a hurry, for we had had all the scares that we wanted. We didn't care to be caught out after dark among the dunes, even if the lions didn't have any teeth.

It is hard walking across the hills and through the sand, but along the beach, close to the water, the wind and waves had packed the sand hard, until it was better than a sidewalk. We decided to walk along the shore two or three miles before turning off into the dunes.

"We can't get lost," Skinny told us. "Here is the lake; there are the dunes, and on the other side of the dunes is the railroad. All we will have to do when we turn off is to find the railroad and follow it into Chesterton."

Just the same, we hadn't been climbing around among the sand hills twenty minutes after leaving the lake shore when I noticed a clump of trees straight ahead, which I knew we had passed on our right ten minutes before. We had been going around in a circle and not one of us knew which way was the railroad, or which was the lake, and it was getting darker every minute.

It is different when you are among the sand dunes in the daytime, or when you are lost anywhere in the daytime. We were lost on Greylock Mountain once, at home, in the daytime, and it didn't seem nearly so bad.

If there had been moss on the trunks of the trees, as there was on Greylock, we could have found our way, because it grows on the north side of the trees sometimes. But the trees in the sand were small and didn't have any moss. If it hadn't

been cloudy we should have been all right, because Mr. Norton, our Scoutmaster, had showed us how to find the Big Dipper in the sky and then look for the North Star, which always shows which way north is. To make matters worse, everybody wanted to go in a different direction.

Finally, after we had been chasing around, I don't know how long, Skinny stopped us.

"Mr. Norton," he said, "told us never to lose our heads. When anything happens, he says, we must keep cool and think it out carefully; decide what is best to do and then do it."

"It's time somebody did some tall thinking, then," Hank told him, "unless we want to stay here all night, for we are miles from camp and don't know which way to go."

"Guess what," Benny said, after we all had talked it over. "Let's divide up into twos and go four different ways. We can signal to each other with matches; that is, if we have matches enough."

The boys all felt in their pockets and found that they had matches. It isn't safe to be without matches when you are camping and we always carry

them, sometimes corked up in little bottles so that they will not get damp.

"Look for lights from the tops of the hills. Where there are lights there are folks."

"And where there are folks," Skinny added, "there is something to eat. I am so hungry that I could almost eat one of those lions."

We did that, each couple climbing a different hill. Then, by calling back and forth, we were able to make our way down and come together again. After we had been climbing and looking for what seemed a long time, we heard a shout from one of the boys and hurried up his hill.

He pointed to a light, which we could see bobbing along. It looked as if somebody was carrying a lighted lantern. A little beyond we could see a steady light, as if coming from the window of a house.

We took our bearings carefully; then, keeping together, we hurried in the direction of the lights. After a time we climbed another hill, to make sure. The lantern was gone, but we could see the light from the house quite plain; it was so much nearer.

From there on it was easy except that it was hard walking through the sand, and pretty soon we came to the railroad and knew that we were all right.

"I don't know when we will get back to camp," said Skinny, "but we are not lost; that's sure. It won't make much difference, anyhow, for if we don't want to go clear to camp we can sleep out under the trees near Chesterton."

Just then I heard Bill, who was on ahead, say, "Great snakes!" in such a voice that I knew something was the matter.

"Boys, come here, quick," he called.

We hurried along and then stopped, paralyzed. There on the track was a pile of ties, enough to wreck any train, and they were fastened to the rails with chains.

It scared us for a minute; then Skinny burst out laughing.

"Some more moving pictures," said he. "Gee, this is their busy day, all right. But betcher life the Band is on to them. They can fool Raven Patrol once, but they can't do it again. I'll tell you

what let's do. Let's hang around and get in the picture. They are going to play hold up a train."

"But, Skinny," said Hank, who has a camera and knows a lot about such things, "how are they going to take pictures at night?"

"They can let off a flashlight, can't they?"

We could see in a minute what they were up to and we made up our minds to get in it, if they would let us, just as Skinny had said.

"Guess what," said Benny, "they ought to have a few lions around, without any teeth, to make it real exciting."

"I'll lasso one of the passengers, just as the flash goes off," Skinny told us. "That will make things lively."

All this time we were walking toward a light which we could see shining out of the window in a little building down the track, looking for the moving picture men. When we had come nearer we found that it was a little telegraph station; but Benny was wrong when he said that where there are lights there are folks, because the station was empty when we looked in.

"I wonder where they are," said Harry.

Just then we heard a rough voice behind us say:

"Get in there, every one of you, and don't you make a sound. If you do I'll blow your heads off."

We turned and could see a man standing back in the shadow, where we couldn't see his face.

"In with you," he said again.

"Aw, say," coaxed Skinny; "let us be in it. We won't hurt anything. We came near getting in the ones back on the lake shore. Come on; I'll lasso one of the passengers. It will be great."

"What do you know about it, Red?" said the man to somebody back in the dark. "The kid wants to be in it. What did you say you were in over on the lake?" he asked, turning to us again.

"The moving pictures. We were scared at first, until we found out what they were."

When Skinny said that the man gave a little snort.

"Movin' pictures!" said he. "There ain't no movin' pictures about——"

Just then the other man called to him, and after telling us to stand still, he went back a few steps

and they whispered together. When he came again he said:

"It will be 'most an hour before the moving-picture stunt will be pulled off. You boys will have to go inside and wait."

"We can't wait an hour," Skinny told him, "but we're much obliged, just the same. Maybe we can come over to-morrow, if you will take some more then."

We started on when Skinny said that, for we knew that we ought to be getting back and that if Mr. Norton did come home he would be worried not to find us. The man stopped us.

"Did you hear me tell you to get in there?" said he. "Shall I truss 'em up, Red? One of the kids has got a rope."

"Who would have thought that there would be a pack of boys along here this time of night," said the other. "We don't want to hurt the kids, but it won't do to let them go on and give the alarm. Cut the telephone wire and lock them in the station."

"Where's the operator?"

"We've got him safe enough up in the bushes. He won't give us any trouble."

"Now, look here," the man said, turning to us. "You heard him. Will you stay quiet in the station, or will we have to tie you up?"

"We'd rather stay quiet," said Benny, "only Mr. Norton will be wondering where we are."

"I'll wait outside the window," the man went on, after he had fixed the telephone so that we couldn't use it. "If one of you puts a head outside I'll knock it off. Do you get me? And if you make a sound until we turn you loose, I'll tie you up so tight that you can't wiggle, and gag you in the bargain."

With that he shut and locked the door and left us there alone.

CHAPTER XII

TRAIN ROBBERS AT DUNE PARK

IF you never saw anybody who was scared, you ought to have seen the Boy Scouts of Bob's Hill about that time. We stood there, looking at each other and at Skinny, he being patrol leader. He was almost pale and I saw him wetting his lips with his tongue.

I don't know how long we stood there, too scared to think and hardly breathing. There was not a sound except the clicking of a telegraph instrument, as the railroad messages went over the wires.

At first, we didn't hear that even; didn't hear anything except the beating of our hearts. Mine was thumping so loud that I was afraid the man would hear it outside. Perhaps the machine didn't click at first, but after a little I heard it. Then I saw Hank give a start and look in that direction, as if he was thinking of something.

"The telegraph!" he whispered, beckoning for us to come closer. "If we only knew how we could give the alarm."

"That's what," Skinny whispered back. "But we don't know how. We're up against the real thing this time. Somebody is going to get hurt when the train strikes those ties."

"We've got to do something. They use the same letters in sending telegrams as we do in our smoke signals."

"Smoke is different," said Bill. "I sent smoke signals that time I was lost on Greylock, but I couldn't have telegraphed. Besides, the man will shoot us or something, if we move."

But Hank kept looking at the clicking instrument and thinking. Finally, he straightened up and I saw his jaw set, like it does sometimes when you know that you ought to do a thing and make up your mind to do it, no matter what happens.

"I'm going to try it, anyhow," said he, still whispering. "They can't any more than kill me. I watched a telegraph operator once. You stand where you are and don't make a sound. Don't look

at me, or the man will see. I'm going to get a drink."

I was thirsty myself, but that wasn't any time to be getting a drink. Before we could stop him, Hank walked slowly to a pail of water that stood in one corner of the room and took a drink. I was watching out of the corners of my eyes and saw him take out his handkerchief and wipe his lips; then, as he was putting the handkerchief back in his pocket, it fell on the floor.

He stooped to get it and waited there on the floor, out of sight from the window, to see if the man would say anything; then, when no sound came from the outside, began to crawl around the sides of the room. We couldn't hear him and didn't dare look, but we knew that he was slowly edging along toward the window, to pass under it. I thought it would take him forever and every second I expected to see the man put his head in, but at last he reached the desk where the telegraph instrument was clicking, out of sight from the window.

Then he stood up and took hold of the key.

"Train robbers, Dune Park," was what he spelled

out, or tried to, not knowing whether he was doing it right or not.

He had started to spell it out again, when the man looked in at the window and missed him. The robber put his body part way in, looked around the room, and saw Hank fooling with the key.

"Drop that," he said. "Get back there where you belong. I'll fix you so you won't move again."

With that, he came inside and made us sit in a row on a bench. Then he took Skinny's rope and tied us fast to the back. We could move our feet but we could not get up.

"That's what I ought to have done in the first place," said he.

"Did you send it, Hank?" whispered Skinny, after the man had gone out again.

"I don't know. I tried to, but I don't know whether anyone could get the message or not."

So we sat there and waited, but Skinny was getting mad because the man had tied him with his own rope.

All the time the telegraph thing went on clicking and trying to say something which we couldn't un-

derstand, or, anyhow, that was what it seemed like. We listened as hard as we could, trying to tell which clicks were meant for dots and which for dashes and to spell out the words, but it wasn't any use: we couldn't make it out at all.

It seemed like a month to us sitting there, wondering whether Hank had made them understand or not and whether they would have time to do anything, even if they did understand. Every sound made us jump.

The man had done a good job of tying, using small cord to tie our wrists together back of us and the rope to fasten us to the bench. I pulled at mine, until I thought that my wrists would be cut off and so did all the boys, but we couldn't get loose.

Finally, after we had given up and were sitting there waiting, Skinny all of a sudden said:

“Hark!”

Everybody had been harking as hard as he could before that, but when Skinny spoke we sat up straight and listened. Away off in the distance we heard the whistle of an engine.

"She's coming," groaned Hank. "I didn't make them understand."

The men heard it, too, for they began to hustle around outside. We felt sure that nobody was left at the window.

"We might yell," said Bill. "It would be better than sitting still and doing nothing. I am hoarse, but I guess I could make a little noise, just the same."

"Get ready," said Skinny in a low tone. "When I say three, everybody yell, and do your best. Now! One! *Two!* THREE!"

Every one of us gave a terrible screech. It was awful to hear, especially Bill Wilson's. But there was no chance of making anybody hear except the robbers and the telegraph man, lying somewhere in the bushes; we didn't know where.

Just after we yelled, there came another whistle, this time nearer; then a rumble and roar.

"She's going past," said Skinny with a groan. "You tried, all right, Hank, but you are no good on the telegraph. She'll hit the ties in a second."

"No; she's stopping."

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We could hear the brakes go on. Then came a shot and answering shots; then a whole lot of them, sounding like the battle did on the lake front. We could hear the voices of men and footsteps running through the sand, and some more shooting up among the hills.

“ Oh, I didn’t make them understand, didn’t I? ” said Hank. “ Oh, no, maybe not! ”

It made us feel good all through, and Skinny grew real chesty about it.

“ You are all right, Hank, ” said he. “ Say, didn’t I tell you that they would know who was around here before we got through with them? I hope they filled those ginks full of holes—using my rope to tie us with! ”

We didn’t hear anything more for a few seconds and began to be afraid that the train was getting ready to go on, with us still tied.

“ Let’s yell again, ” said Dick. “ There is somebody to hear this time. Count again, Skinny. ”

I’ll bet it sounded like a band of Indians. Anyhow, in a minute we heard some men come running up to the station. One of them tried the door and

finding it locked put his head in at the window, holding a revolver ready to shoot.

"Don't shoot, mister," yelled Skinny. "It's only us."

"For the love of Pete!" exclaimed the man. "Bill, come here."

"I can't," said Bill Wilson. "I'm tied."

But the man was talking to another Bill, and just then he looked in at the window and saw us sitting there in a row.

"It's a Sunday school," said he. "Where's the teacher?"

"What are you kids doing here?" asked the other. "Open the door and let us in."

"We're tied," we told them. "The robbers tied us and locked us in, for fear that we would give the alarm."

When the men heard that it didn't take them long to break in the door, but it took quite a while to untie us, because Skinny wouldn't let them cut his rope.

"How did you come to be here?"

"We had been over seeing the moving pictures,"

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Benny told him, "and were on our way home, when we saw the ties. We thought this was one, too, but it wasn't. The robbers saw us and locked us in here."

"Where is the operator?"

"We heard them say that he was tied up in the bushes somewhere."

"You boys come along and help find him. We can't hold that train much longer."

We had to look several minutes, but finally we heard someone groaning in the bushes and found him lying there, bound and gagged. He couldn't talk at first, or walk, but after the men had helped him down to the station and given him some water he felt better.

Just then the other men came back.

"You might as well look for a needle in a haystack as to try to find them at night in these sand dunes," one of them was saying. "They'd see us coming with the lanterns and would get the drop on us, sure. We've saved the train, anyhow, and they will have hard work getting very far."

It surprised them some to find us boys there, but they didn't pay much attention to us and commenced asking the operator questions about how the men looked, when they tied him up, and things like that.

The operator told them that when he first saw the robbers he thought they were hunters on their way home, for hunters go by there almost every day.

"But when they pulled their guns on me, I tumbled," he said.

"It's lucky that you had a chance to send the message. I don't see how you did it when they had the drop on you."

"Message? I didn't send any message. What are you talking about?"

"Who did, then? Somebody telegraphed that there were train robbers at Dune Park, or we shouldn't have known anything about it until after it happened."

"We sent it," Skinny told them. "Betcher life they don't wreck any trains when Raven Patrol is around."

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"You! What do a lot of kids like you know about telegraphing?"

"We are Boy Scouts," said Skinny, sort of mad to have him talk that way about us. "We know all kinds of things. We saw a train wreck once and helped bandage the passengers who got hurt. Didn't we, fellers?"

"We didn't all send it," Benny explained, when the man still didn't seem to understand. "Hank did it. Didn't you, Hank?"

"Well, the rest of you would have done it, if I hadn't," said Hank. "You see," he went on, turning to the man who was asking the questions and who seemed to be the boss, "we belong to the Boy Scouts of America and are camping over on Long Lake, south of Chesterton. Every first-class Boy Scout has to know how to signal with the Morse letters. We never had tried telegraphing, but it was up to us to do something; so we did that. That's why they tied us up. They saw me fooling with the telegraph key. But they didn't think that I had sent any message."

"Well, what do you know about that!" said the man.

"The express company ought to give every one of you a leather medal for this night's work. There's a barrel of money on that train."

When he said that I saw Skinny and Bill nudging each other and saying, "You do it." "No, you." Then they whispered to me, being secretary.

"Well, what is it?" said the man.

"If you'll let us ride as far as Chesterton and stop the train there for us to get off, we'll call it square."

There was a great laugh at that, although we couldn't see anything to laugh at. We were tired and mighty hungry. In a few minutes we were on the train, hurrying toward Chesterton, trying to make up lost time. Folks wondered why the fast train from Chicago stopped at Chesterton that night, but they didn't find out until afterwards.

The man took our names on the way over because, he said, the company would want to send us a card of thanks and maybe something with it.

"We are Boy Scouts," Hank told him, "and

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Scout law says that we have to help people and must not expect to be paid for it. We must try to do a good deed every day."

"That's a good law," he said, "but a few thanks won't hurt anybody, and if they should send something better than thanks, don't send it back. Leastwise," he went on, winking at the others, "if you must send it to somebody, let Yours Truly be the recipient of your bounty."

We found out that Hank's message was just in time. The train dispatcher in Chicago caught it as it was going over the wire. He said that if it had been sent by somebody who knew how, he might not have noticed it, but Hank made such funny-sounding clicks that he caught it right away and knew there was trouble. The rest was easy. The train was ready to start. It was sent out on time as usual, and a lot of armed men went with it, in order to catch the robbers if they could. When the train neared Dune Park the engineer slowed down a little and kept his eyes glued to the track, for he expected to find ties, or something. The men with guns were off the train before it came to

a stop, but the robbers were too quick for them and got away among the sand hills.

We hadn't much more than started away from the depot in Chesterton when a policeman came running up to us.

"Are you the kids that are camping on Long Lake with a man named Norton?" he asked.

It scared us some, for we thought he was going to run us in. But we told him that we were.

"Well, what are you doing here at this time of night? Norton is nearly crazy about you. He has been keeping the telephone wires hot for the last hour and we were just going out with an automobile to look you up."

When we told him about the robbers, you ought to have seen his eyes bulge out. It made us feel proud.

"Here," said he, "you boys deserve a ride. Pile into the machine and I'll take you back to camp."

CHAPTER XIII

LETTERS FOR MR. G. MILLER

“**S**AY, are you the boys who are camping out on Long Lake?” asked a clerk in the Valparaiso post office one morning, a few days after our visit to the dunes.

Benny and I had stopped in there to buy some stamps. It was our turn to go to town after supplies. By that time nearly everybody in the city knew that there was a Boy Scout Camp out there and the *Vidette* had our names in the paper on account of the train robbers.

We told him that we were guilty.

“Is Mr. G. Miller camping with you?”

“No,” I said, “Mr. Norton is. He is our Scout-master.”

“I am afraid he won’t do. You see we have a couple of letters here for Mr. G. Miller, Long Lake Camp, near Valparaiso, Indiana. How in Sam Hill

do they expect me to know everybody on Long Lake?"

"There is a new camp up the lake from us. We don't know the people yet. Maybe he's there."

"Well, if you happen to see him, tell him to come in and get his letters. We can't deliver out there."

A little later, when we were buying some things at the grocery, Benny commenced to laugh. I thought he would have a fit.

"What's the joke?" I said. "Bacon is still twenty-two cents a pound and that's no joke, believe me. We are 'most out of money."

"Mr. G. Miller!" he said, slapping me on the back. "It's Skinny, that's who it is."

You could have knocked me down with a feather when Benny said that. Of course it was Skinny. His front name is Gabriel, but he hardly knows it himself. I've heard his folks call him Skinny, but I never heard anybody call him G. or Mister, except Alice that time.

We went back to the post office and got the letters. The clerk wouldn't believe us at first, because we had said that there wasn't any such person in

our camp, but after we had told him how it was he laughed and let us have the letters. Both of them were from Chicago. One was from the Railroad Company and the other from the Express Company.

It made us excited to see those letters and we hurried back to camp as soon as we could. We found Skinny out in a boat, fishing, but he pulled in to shore when Benny held up the letters for him to see.

"Didn't I tell you folks would find out that we were here?" said he, looking at the letters all over and holding them up to the sun to see what was inside.

"Great snakes! Open them, Mr. G. Miller," said Bill. "But break the news to us gently. We can't stand much."

Skinny opened them one after the other; then stood there, speechless, his eyes sticking out like saucers.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Bill, winking at the rest of us, "Mr. G. Miller will now go into the fitting room and have a fit."

At that Skinny came to and handed the letters over to Bill.

“Great snakes and little fishes!” he shouted, after he had looked at them.

When he had said that he stood on his hands, kicking his heels in the air and cawing to beat the band.

There is only one thing to do at a time like that and, being secretary, I did it. There was a barrel stave lying on the ground, handy. I grabbed it and gave Bill the occidental degree in great shape, laying it on good and plenty where it belonged.

Bill gave a roar and tumbled over on the grass, while Hank snatched the letters from him.

“Let us all hear,” called Dick. “Stand on the stump and read them out loud.”

So Hank did that, and we were as much excited as the others, when we heard what the letters had to say. Here is what the Express Company wrote:

“MR. G. MILLER, Long Lake, Valparaiso, Ind.

“DEAR SIR: In appreciation of the services of your Boy Scouts, which resulted in saving us from a

serious loss at Dune Park several nights ago, the Company wishes not only to thank you but to show its appreciation in a more substantial manner. We understand that you are camping out on Long Lake and while we have been informed that Boy Scouts do not expect to be rewarded for their good deeds, we ask you as a special favor to us to permit us to pay your expenses during your outing. If the enclosed check is not enough to do it, we'll make up the balance. We wish especially to thank the boy who sent the alarm and if he ever wants a good job he has only to present this letter by mail or in person to an officer of this Company."

Hank was so excited that a little breeze tore the check from his hands and it went sailing down toward the lake, the whole bunch of us chasing it and falling all over ourselves trying to grab it. Benny was the one who caught it. He gave one look and yelled:

"Gee! Everybody caw!"

There was an awful racket for a minute. Then the check was passed from one to the other, while Bill climbed up on the stump, flapped his arms, and crowed like a rooster.

"Skinny," said he, when he had stopped the

rooster business, "I mean Mr. President, Mr. G. President, may I speak and live?"

"You may," said Skinny, "or forever after hold your peace."

"I make a motion that the secretary must put the check in the minutes of the meetin'."

"Don't put the check in," I told them. "We need that."

"Pedro," said he, "you'll never make a good secretary. Putting it in the minutes means to write it in, not to put the real check in."

"Why don't you say write it, then?" I told him.

"Everybody that wants Pedro to tell about the check," shouted Bill, before Skinny could speak, "walk on their hands."

Bill was the only one because he is the only one that can do it, but I'll put it in, just the same, and here it is as I remember it:

FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.
 Pay to the order of G. Miller Two Hun-
 dred Dollars \$200.00
 SOMEBODY OR OTHER,
 Treasurer.

We couldn't read the writing where the man signed his name, but that didn't make any difference. We knew that it would be good for the money, just the same.

"I can't make it come out even," said Skinny, who had been figuring on a board. "There are nine of us and it comes to \$22.22 and all kinds of two's after it, until you can't rest."

"Guess what," spoke up Benny. "Mr. Norton counts for one, doesn't he? That makes ten and it comes out just even."

We were so excited over having so much money that we almost forgot the other letter, until somebody asked about it.

"Read the other, Hank," we told him. So he climbed the stump once more and read in a loud voice, we listening and growing more excited than before. It was from the General Passenger Agent.

"MR. G. MILLER AND PARTY, Long Lake, Valparaiso, Ind.

"DEAR SIR: In recognition of your services in preventing the robbery of one of our trains at Dune

Park, the other night, I take pleasure in inclosing an order, which will be honored by our Valparaiso agent, for nine first-class tickets to Adams, Mass., where I understand that you live. Let me say further that the Boy Scout uniform hereafter will receive every courtesy throughout our railroad system, as a result of your timely action."

When Mr. Norton came in, he was almost as tickled as we were.

"How about it, Mr. Norton?" Hank asked, finally. "Can we take this money? Isn't it against Scout law?"

"Well, let us see. Suppose that we repeat the law. You begin, Hank, with the first."

" 'A Scout is trustworthy. A Scout's honor is to be trusted. If he were to violate his honor by telling a lie, or by cheating, or by not doing exactly a given task, when trusted on his honor, his Scout badge could be taken away from him.' "

"Number two."

" 'A Scout is loyal,' " I said.

" 'He is loyal to all to whom loyalty is due; his patrol leader, his home, parents, and country.' "

"We are all right so far, as the man said when he was falling from a sixteenth-story window. What is the next one, Bill?"

" 'A Scout is helpful.

" 'He must be prepared at any time to save life, help injured persons, and share the home duties. He must do at least one good turn to somebody every day.' "

"Next, Skinny."

" 'A Scout is friendly.

" 'He is a friend to all and a brother to every other Scout.' "

"The next one is the one, I think," said Hank. "It says:

" 'A Scout is courteous. He is polite to all, especially to women, children, old people, and the weak and helpless.' My book says that he must not take pay for being helpful or courteous."

"We certainly seem to be getting warm. Before we discuss it, suppose that we go through the list. What is the sixth law?"

" 'A Scout is kind,' " said Benny. " 'He is a friend to animals. He will not kill or hurt any

living creature needlessly, but will strive to save and protect all harmless life.' ”

“ The next, Harry.”

“ ‘ A Scout is obedient.

“ ‘ He obeys his parents, Scoutmaster, patrol leader, and all other duly constituted authorities.’ ”

“ You fellers want to remember that about obeying the patrol leader,” said Skinny, “ or I’ll put a head on some of you. I have spoken.”

“ What is the next one? ”

“ ‘ A Scout is cheerful,’ ” said Wally. “ ‘ He smiles whenever he can. His obedience to orders is prompt and cheery. He never shirks nor grumbles at hardships.’ ”

“ Listen to this,” said Hank, fishing a book out of his pocket. “ ‘ A Scout is thrifty. He does not wantonly destroy property. He works faithfully, wastes nothing, and makes the best use of his opportunities. He saves his money so that he may pay his own way, be generous to those in need, and helpful to worthy objects.’ Then it goes on to say at the bottom, ‘ He may work for pay, but

must not receive tips for courtesies or good turns.' ”

“ We might as well go through with them. Read the others.”

“ ‘ 10. A Scout is brave. He has the courage to face danger in spite of fear and has to stand up for the right against the coaxings of friends or the jeers or threats of enemies, and defeat does not down him.

“ ‘ 11. A Scout is clean. He keeps clean in body and thought, stands for clean speech, clean sport, clean habits, and travels with a clean crowd.

“ ‘ 12. A Scout is reverent. He is reverent toward God. He is faithful in his religious duties and respects the convictions of others in matters of custom and religion.’ ”

“ There, we have them all, and good laws they are. Boys who live up to those laws will make the finest kind of men. Two of them seem to bear upon Hank’s question, but I am inclined to think that in this particular case no good purpose would be served in refusing the money or the tickets. You certainly did a great public service and while you did not do

it for pay or expect to be rewarded, the two companies owe it to the public whom they serve to recognize a service of that kind. What do you say, Mr. Patrol Leader?"

"I say," said Skinny, "that I'll risk it, if the rest will."

CHAPTER XIV

THE RAVENS FIND A RIVAL CAMP

THINGS were pretty quiet after that for a long time, three or four days, anyhow, but that does not mean that we were not having fun. There can't be something happening every minute, although Pa says to leave it to us and there will be something doing every day in the week.

After the railroad tickets and expense money were sent us we didn't have to pick any more berries, and we were not sorry. Berry picking is hard work when you have to do it. If you are picking for fun it seems to make a difference. I've picked blueberries halfway up Greylock, with the sun pouring down until the bowlders, showing above ground, were too hot to step upon with bare feet, and have played Indian around there, without minding the heat very much; but some of the mornings in that huckleberry patch were fierce.

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That gave us more time to play and to practice our Scout stunts, and we kept Mr. Norton busy when he wasn't in Chicago. When night came we usually were tired enough to go to bed with the birds, except when there were some doings in the evening, and we usually were up with the sun or soon after.

It is different when you are in the country that way, camping out. At home we never are ready to go to bed and we have hard work getting up in the morning in time for school.

I woke up one morning just as the day was dawning and slipped out of the tent without waking the others. In the trees birds were beginning to twitter, telling one another that it was time to be stirring and chasing around after worms. A robin chirped a little to sort of try out his voice and then, catching the tune, commenced to sing to beat the band. Another robin joined in the music and pretty soon they were all at it. From woods and lake-side came a chorus that people in large cities never hear.

It was great, but I didn't think much about it until Mr. Norton came out of his tent and stood listen-

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ing and watching the coming of the morning across the water.

"You are right, John," he said, after a moment, although I had not said a word about it. "I don't know what Heaven is like or whether birds have souls, but it seems to me that it would be a poor sort of a place without bird music. I'd rather camp out here on Long Lake, listening to that concert and smelling the odors of the morning. Believe me, the angels will have to go some to beat those robins. Suppose that you call the other boys; sleeping is a waste of time."

I picked up a barrel stave and crept quietly into the tent. Skinny was dreaming of Bob's Hill and lying exactly in the right position to be waked up.

Whack! went the stave. There was a yell from Skinny and in a minute, before I had time to hit the others, there was a great scramble in and out of the tent, with Mr. Norton trying to keep out of the way. The boys soon grabbed me and rushed me down to the lake and to the end of our little pier. I didn't care, although I hung back all I could.

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“Now, all together!” said Skinny. “In with him! *Sick semper turn us!*”

I just had time to draw in a long breath before I struck the water with a big splash and sank out of sight. In another minute all the others had jumped or pushed each other in and we were all splashing around in the water like so many porpoises.

It was a fine way to begin the day, and we came out feeling as if we owned the whole world, with Long Lake thrown in, and as if we could eat everything in camp. Soon the smell of bacon, frying, almost drove us crazy and made us forget the birds.

“I like the smell of the woods,” Skinny told us, “but it ain’t in it with bacon when you are hungry.”

The griddle began to smoke and on went the pancake batter in little dabs that spread out in delicious cakes, soon to be flopped over and browned on the other side.

“The coffee is ready,” sang out Mr. Norton. “Get busy, boys, while these cakes are hot. We must get some more honey from the honey farm at

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Moss Lake to-day, but I guess there is enough for breakfast."

"There will have to be lots to be enough," Bill told him as we sat down.

Did you ever eat bacon and eggs and pancakes and honey out in the woods, or on the shore of some lake or river, with nobody around to say that you have eaten ten cakes and that was enough for anybody? If you never did you have missed something.

We lay around a while, taking it easy, and then started in on our morning's work. Some of us washed and wiped the dishes; others put the bedding out to air in the sunshine and slicked up the camp so that we would not be ashamed of it in case Mrs. Laurence and Alice should happen around. One bunch, headed by Skinny with his hatchet, went into the woods after a supply of wood.

"What are you going to do to-day, boys?" asked Mr. Norton, after everything was in shape to leave.

"Some more of the same," said Hank. "Maybe I'll go fishing. I haven't been fishing since yesterday."

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“How would you like to go on a short hike and practice our signaling? You are pretty good at smoke signals, but we haven’t tried any wigwagging for some time.”

That sounded good to us and soon after we started down the railroad track, intending to cross over to the main highway on Wahob Lake road, then hike to Chesterton and perhaps go on as far as Lake Michigan, north of the town. At Wahob Lake we stopped to try our signals.

“Part can stand on the bluff at this end,” Mr. Norton told us, “and the others can go around to the opposite bluff. It is about half a mile across.”

But when we all had climbed the bluff and looked across to pick out the right place to signal from, we saw something which changed our minds about going on to Chesterton. We hardly could believe our eyes, but on the other side of the lake, half hidden among the trees, was a camp which we knew had not been there a few days before.

Mr. Norton took out his field glass and looked across and kept looking so long I thought that he

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never would get through. Finally, he handed the glasses to Skinny.

"See if you can make them out," said he.

"Gee-whilikins!" yelled Skinny, when he had looked.

"Let the rest of us see, can't you?" Bill told him, grabbing for the glasses. "What's the use of keeping them all day?"

"Great snakes!" I heard him exclaim. "See who's here. Name it, Pedro, and you can have it."

I looked and grew as excited as the others.

"It's a Boy Scout," I shouted, "I can see his uniform plain. There must be more of them. I don't know who they are, or where they came from, but they are Boy Scouts, all right."

After that everyone had to look. We didn't know what to make of it, but we felt glad about it, all except Skinny.

"Fellers," said he, drawing away so that Mr. Norton wouldn't hear him, "how about it? Is the Band going to stand for this? Ain't these our lakes? Well, I guess yes. If we can lick the Gingham Ground Gang, betcher life we can lick these

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guys. I'll be getting fat if I don't have a fight pretty soon."

"We ain't the Band any more, Skinny," I told him, for I wasn't hankering after any fight. It's fun, too, but what's the use? "We are Boy Scouts and can only fight the enemy."

"Well, they are the enemy, ain't they?"

"How about doing somebody a kindness every day?" asked Benny.

"Wouldn't it be a kindness to us to let us pitch into 'em? Come on, let's duck 'em in the lake."

"Skinny's got a chip on his shoulder to-day," said Bill.

"You dassn't knock it off, anyhow. Come on, if you dast."

Bill was just going to knock it off, when Mr. Norton heard the fuss and turned around.

"If anybody is interested in chips," said he, "there are some up in the woods which we need for our fire. We'll have a lot of fun with those fellows. There seem to be enough of them so that you can have that ball game you have been wanting so long. Let's speak to them."

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"That's the stuff," cried Bill. "I'll beat you around the lake, Skinny."

They were just starting off on a run when Mr. Norton called them back.

"There is a better way," said he, "although we will go over a little later and get acquainted. We came out to practice signaling, didn't we? Well, here is our chance. Get out there with the flags, somebody, and show them what the Bob's Hill boys can do."

Skinny grabbed the flags and went out to the edge of the bluff away from the trees and began to wave, while Mr. Norton watched through the glasses.

"They don't see you," he said, after a little time. "I think it would be a good idea if our esteemed assistant patrol leader would give one of his yells. Can you make them hear, Bill?"

Bill didn't waste any breath talking about it, but I thought he would turn himself inside out for a minute. Out over the water floated the blood-curdling sounds, while we watched to see what would happen.

They heard, all right, and came down to the

shore of the lake to see who was yelling. It made Bill proud.

"Skinny is great stuff for some things," he said, "but when you want something doing, call on little Willie."

"Huh!" Skinny began. "I——"

"Get busy with the flags, Captain, while they are looking," Mr. Norton told him.

Skinny commenced to wave again, while I watched through the glasses. I could see the boys standing there, looking across at us and wondering, maybe, if we had gone crazy. Then one of them turned his head as if to call to somebody and I saw a man run out of one of the tents and look at us through a glass.

"Wave, Skinny," I called. "Wave hard. Their Scoutmaster is looking."

At the same time, I stepped out in front where I knew the Scoutmaster could see me through his glasses and raised three fingers of my right hand to my forehead. The other boys did the same, all but Skinny. He was too busy waving.

That is the Scout salute and we are always sup-

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posed to salute an officer. The three fingers are to remind us of the three promises in the Scout oath. Before a boy can become a Scout he must promise:

On my honor I will do my best:

1. To do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout law.
2. To help other people at all times.
3. To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

If you never had signaled with flags you couldn't have told what Skinny was sending, but we knew and so did the Boy Scouts across the lake. A Boy Scout has to know all about such things before he can get a first-class Scout's badge. There are several ways to signal with flags by day and lanterns, or torches, at night. Skinny was using what is called the semaphore code. Everybody has seen semaphore signals along a railroad track. There is a tall mast with an arm, or several arms. The signal man sets the arm at a certain angle and the engineer on the train knows what that means.

We do the same in signaling with flags. The body is the mast and the way we hold our arms means a certain letter. The flags, or the torches, make it easier for the signal to be seen. By making letters we can spell out words and messages. It is easy when you know how, but it takes a lot of practice to be able to do it right and to read what the flags are saying.

"You watch through the glass, Pedro," said Mr. Norton to me. "Skinny cannot talk with the flags and hold the glasses at the same time. Our patrol leader seems to have lost that chip off his shoulder, so we will let him do the talking. We will take turns listening and you, being secretary, may start off first. This is a case of hearing with your eyes. Go carefully; we do not know how skillful those fellows are."

"Let Benny write it down," I said, "while I call off the letters."

All this time Skinny had been waving to attract their attention. Then, when I saw that they had begun to understand what we were up to, I told him to go ahead with the message.

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"H," he spelled, "E-L-L——"

"Guess what," broke in Benny. "That's swearing, and it's against Scout law."

Skinny looked around and grinned; then held the flag which was in his right hand straight out from the shoulder and brought the other across, in a position halfway between the other flag and his head. That meant O. Then he stopped and spelled the word again.

"Say, Skinny," said Bill, "if you think you are telephoning you'd better let me do it."

Skinny was too busy to say anything. I held up one hand for them to keep still, for one of the Scouts across the lake had taken up some flags and commenced to wave.

"H-e-l-l-o," I spelled.

"Who are you?" asked Skinny.

"Patrol 4, Troop 1, Hyde Park, Chicago."

"What are you doing here?"

"Camping. We just came. Who are you?"

"Patrol 1, Troop 3, Adams, Mass."

"What are you doing way out here?"

"Having fun."

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Just then some other Scout caught up the flags and waved.

“Oh, Skinny, come on over.”

“They’ve heard about us!” exclaimed Bill, who was taking the message.

“I think not,” laughed Mr. Norton. “That seems to be a favorite salutation out here.”

“Come over yourself. Come halfway,” waved Skinny.

“All right,” spelled the flags.

“Come on, fellows,” said Mr. Norton. “We will go to meet them.”

At home if the Gingham Ground Gang had told us to come halfway it would have meant fight, but we knew that this was different and started on a run.

It made us feel queer to meet Boy Scouts out in the woods that way. Of course, it wasn’t strange. The queer part, I suppose, was for them to meet us so far from home. They were only about forty miles from Hyde Park. We found that they had come the day before on a Baltimore and Ohio train to Woodville, about a mile and a half from Wahob

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Lake. They loaded their camping outfit on an electric car and took the car themselves out to the lake. Their Scoutmaster told them that they would get walking enough after they were settled and they might as well take it easy when they had a chance.

We went back with them to their camp. It was on a wooded bluff, north of the east end of the lake, a half mile or more from the interurban railway but not so far from a wagon road running east and west. There were a few little cottages at the west end of the lake, but where they were was wild, with no folks around. Between them and our camp was a tangle of bushes and ferns and woods, with little lakes in between—just the place to explore and track the enemy.

“I think that we’ll go on now,” said Mr. Norton, after we had talked a while. “We must give you fellows a good chance to get thoroughly settled. We are glad that you are here. You boys will have a great time together and we will have a little friendly rivalry over our Scout stunts.”

“And a ball game,” said Bill. “We are aching for a ball game and there will be just enough.”

"Betcher life," said Skinny, "we can beat you tracking. I'll bet a million dollars that we can. We tracked a bear once, only it wasn't a bear. It was a foolish feller with his boots on the wrong feet. It looked like a bear's track, just the same."

"We know where the best fish are," said Chuck.

"And berries," said Hank.

"And honey," put in Harry.

"And places to swim," added Wally.

"And places to hike," said Dick.

"And girls," I shouted, as we were leaving. I was going to say more, but Skinny nudged me to keep still.

"You bonehead," said he, when we had gone on. "There's fish enough for everybody but only girls enough for our bunch."

CHAPTER XV

THE CHALLENGE

BENNY saw it first. He was standing around outside the tent early next morning, waiting for us to come out for a swim.

“Hey, fellows, come here. Make it fast,” he called in such a surprised tone of voice that we tumbled out all at once.

“What’s the matter?” we asked.

For answer, he pointed to a tree near the eating tent. A big piece of paper was fastened to the bark. On the left side of the paper was a picture of a rattlesnake, with its head up and its tongue sticking out; on the other side was some writing.

We crowded around to read, wondering how it came there and what it all meant. This is what it said:

CHALLENGE!

CAMP WAHOB, July 16.

To Raven Patrol No. 1, Troop 3, Mass.

Patrol 4, Troop 1, Hyde Park, Chicago, having heard your patrol leader, known as Skinny, say that you could beat us tracking, do here, now and forever hurl the words back into your teeth, and we hereby CHALLENGE you to a Tracking Contest, to take place whenever you are ready and wherever you say.

GEORGE W. PARKER,

Be Prepared

Patrol Leader.

Also

Don't Tread on Us.

You could have knocked me down with a feather for a minute after reading that. Skinny read it twice. Then, pulling out his knife, he jammed the blade into the rattlesnake and left it there quivering. He turned around and faced us, with his arms folded like a bandit. Skinny couldn't always remember whether he was a bandit, an Indian, or a Scout.

"Fellers," said he, "you have read the message. The proud Scouts from the big city have spoken. What say the braves from Bob's Hill?"

Bill, being assistant patrol leader, was first to

answer. He jumped into the air and knocked his heels together three times before he came down; then gave our patrol cry, "caw," so loud that I wondered whether they wouldn't hear it at the camp on Wahob Lake. Before the echo had died away, he walked up to the tree and stuck his knife into the rattlesnake.

After that we all did the same, except that only Bill could click his heels together three times. Soon you hardly could see the snake, there were so many knives in it. When we had finished and stood waiting, Skinny pulled his hatchet out of his belt, whirled it around his head, and gave three caws.

"'Tis well," said he. "We have spoken. Let be what is."

We talked it over with Mr. Norton at breakfast and it tickled him to have the Chicago boys come back at us so quickly.

"Those fellows are made of good stuff," said he, "and if you beat them you will have to do your best. What is your plan? I think that you ought to accept the challenge in as formal a way as it was sent."

"We'll nail the Sign to a tree under their very eyes," cried Skinny. "That will show them whether we can track or not."

"Can you do it without their seeing you?"

"Can we! Can we, fellers?"

"I can," said Benny. "I'm the littlest one in the bunch and maybe it will be harder to see me."

That is what we decided to do, but first we had to draw the Sign and write the message.

When Benny was ready to start, he carried in his pocket a paper all ready to be tacked to a tree. There was a circle and in the center was a picture of a crow. Above the crow were the figures 14 and below, 16, meaning to meet at two o'clock on the sixteenth day of the month, which was that very afternoon. At the right of the Sign were these words:

DEFI

CAMP BOB'S HILL, July 16.

To Rattlesnake Patrol No. 4, Troop 1, Ill.

Patrol 1, Troop 3, Mass., accepts the Challenge and defies the Challengers. Tremble when you hear

the caw of the Raven. It will mean Business. More anon.

SKINNY MILLER,
Patrol Leader.

“What is that ‘more anon’ part?” Benny had asked.

“Never mind,” said Skinny, fiercely. “That’s for them to find out.”

Benny was starting on a run, but Skinny thought of something else before he had gone as far as the railroad track.

“Put it on the big tree in front of the middle tent,” he called, “and mum’s the word.”

It isn’t easy to steal up to a camp in daytime without being seen. We didn’t believe that Benny could do it, but we knew that he would do it if anybody could, even if he had to wait around all day.

We did up all the work while we were waiting, and Mr. Norton and Dick took one of the boats and went fishing, hoping to catch enough fish for dinner. Still, Benny didn’t come.

“He ought to have done it in an hour,” com-

plained Skinny, looking at his watch, "half an hour to go and half an hour to come back; and it's all of two hours since he started."

"He's probably waiting for a good chance," I told him.

"Maybe the guys have caught him and tied him up," said Bill.

We hadn't thought of that before, but we saw in a minute what had happened. Skinny began to look around for his rope.

"Keep your eyes peeled, fellers," said he. "They will be sending somebody over here with a message, if they have caught Benny. We won't do a thing to him. Oh, no. Maybe not."

But although we watched in every direction we could see no signs of anybody, except Mr. Norton and Dick, fishing, and some more fishing boats down near the south end of the lake.

"Great snakes!" said Bill. "Come on. Betcher life Benny wouldn't be standing around, waiting, if anything had happened to us."

"We don't know that anything has happened to

him," I told him, "and if there hasn't we might spoil it all."

"That's so," said Skinny. "We'll give him half an hour more, then if he doesn't come, we'll start. We can take the field glass and look across from the west bluff without their seeing us."

"We can't see inside their tents. That is where they'll have him."

"It will be worth trying, anyhow. But we will want Dick with us; we might need him."

"Oh, Dick," he called. "Come on in. We're going somewhere."

Dick didn't say a word for a minue; he was too busy. I saw him stiffen, grab his pole in both hands, and in another moment he had swung a fish into the boat.

"Nothin' doin'," he shouted. "They're just beginning to bite."

We waited half an hour; then, when there were no signs of Benny, we started, going down the railroad track as far as Wahob Lake and creeping up the bluff among the trees.

Skinny lay down on the ground and wriggled his

way out into the open; then took out the glass and looked across. Without a glass, we could see a bunch of the other Scouts, but couldn't tell what they were doing. It looked as if they might have Benny surrounded.

Just then Skinny motioned for us to come. We all threw ourselves flat and crawled out to where he lay, watching.

"He's done it," he told us. "Benny's the stuff, every time. Take a look."

He handed me the glass. In front of the middle tent was a tree and around that tree I could see a bunch of excited boys, looking at a paper that was fastened to the bark.

We crawled back into the shadows to talk it over. Skinny was sure that Benny was all right, for if they had caught him they would have been standing around him, instead of around the message.

"They may have him in a tent," said Bill.

"But he tacked up the message."

"That's nothing. They may have caught him after he tacked it up."

"What, Benny? Not in a thousand years."

"Anyhow, I'm going to signal. If he's in the tent he couldn't see smoke, but he can hear and he can answer."

"Caw!"

The signal floated out over the lake, while we listened with all our might. We didn't hear anything that sounded like a crow.

"Once more," Skinny told him.

"Caw! caw!"

Then as we listened, we heard, faint, as if Benny was a long way off,

"Caw, caw-caw."

But the sound came from far over to the west of the track and not from across the lake.

"It's Benny, all right," said Bill. "Come on."

We started back toward camp down the track, cawing as we went and with Benny getting nearer all the time, and pretty soon he came in sight.

"I did it," he shouted. "They pretty near caught me, but I did it."

We crowded around, patting him on the back and shaking his hand until he was the happiest fellow you ever saw.

"Benny Wade," said Skinny, "you are a lot younger than the rest of us, a year, anyhow, and you are smaller, but you are always there with the goods every time the bell rings. Ain't he, fellers?"

"Betcher life," said Bill. "Come on, one of you guys. Make a chair."

Skinny jumped forward with his right hand clasped around his left wrist. Bill did the same. Then each of them grasped the other's right wrist with his left hand, making a chair. Two of us grabbed Benny, who was trying to get away, and sat him down in the chair. Skinny and Bill then started toward camp with him, while Benny steadied himself by throwing his arms around their necks. That is the way Scouts are taught to carry anyone who is hurt.

When we came in sight of the camp, we saw that Mr. Norton and Dick had come in from the lake and were watching for us, not knowing where we had gone. Mr. Norton caught sight of us first, and when he saw two of us carrying Benny, I thought that he would have a fit. He was over the fence before we could get anywhere near it.

“What is the matter?” he called. “Are you much hurt, Benny?”

For answer, Benny jumped down and turned a couple of handsprings. When he had stopped and sat there on the grass, laughing, the rest of us gave an Indian dance around him, Skinny waving his hatchet and making up a lot of Indian words, while Mr. Norton looked on, wondering. He was as tickled as we were when he heard what had happened.

“Now,” said he, when we had thrown ourselves down on the grass, in the shade of the big tree at our camp, “if Benjamin will tell us all about it, we’ll be glad to listen.”

“It wasn’t anything much,” Benny told him. “I started down the track, intending to cross over on the Wahob Lake road and come in back of the tents; then I happened to think that they could see a part of the road from the camp. So I crossed over between Long Lake and Canada Lake, to come in on the far side of Wahob. It’s so wild in there that, before I knew it, I didn’t know which way I was going, or where I was, and I wandered around

there quite a while. Finally, I heard the whistle of an interurban car and got my bearings from that."

"Why didn't you use your watch for a compass?" Skinny asked. "Point the hour hand at the sun and halfway between that and noon would have been south."

"I didn't have it with me. When I came close to the camp I had to go slow and crawl through the bushes. I made my way around after a long time until I was back of the tents and lay there in the bushes, listening. I couldn't see anybody and didn't know where they were. I could hear the fellows talking out in front and didn't dare go any nearer."

"Great snakes, Benny!" said Bill, "how did you ever do it?"

"I didn't know what to do at first, for I knew that if I went around the tents on either side they couldn't help seeing me. Then I thought of something. The tree that Skinny told about is right in front of the entrance to the middle tent. If I could get into the tent, I thought, I could watch and do

it when they were not looking. But I was afraid somebody might be in the tent.

“Finally I crawled up close behind the tent and listened. I couldn’t hear a sound inside; then I lifted up the canvas at the bottom and peeked in, all ready to run if there should be anybody inside. The tent was empty, so I crawled in.”

“I don’t know whether breaking into a tent could be classed as burglary or not,” said Mr. Norton, “but go on.”

“I had waited there quite a while, when I heard somebody say, ‘It’s in the tent, fellows. Wait a minute and I will get it.’ ”

“Great snakes!” yelled Bill, and I heard Skinny say “Gee-whilikins!” sort of under his breath.

“That was what I thought. I just had time to crawl under some blankets in one corner and lie flat, hardly daring to breathe, when he came in. Say, I was scared stiff, all right. He looked all around for something and I thought every minute he would lift the blankets and find me. When he went out, a bunch of them stood right in the entrance, or in front of it, talking. That was one of

the things which made me gone so long. I thought I never should get out of that tent. They were talking about us.

“ ‘Did you fasten it up good and tight?’ one of them said.

“ ‘You bet I did,’ said somebody else. ‘They couldn’t have helped seeing it the minute they came out of their tents.’

“ ‘I guess it surprised them some. We will hear from them some time to-day. We’d better have some guards; they may be sending us some message.’ ”

We all gave a shout at that. Bill was so tickled that he stood on his hands until his knife, four cents, and two fishhooks dropped out of his pocket.

“You needn’t believe me if you don’t want to,” Benny went on, “but I hardly could keep from cawing. After a while they went farther away. Then I watched my chance, slipped out back of the tree, fastened up the paper, and then into the tent again.

“It only took a few seconds, but I hadn’t much more than crawled out at the back of the tent when

they found it. Say, you never saw such a surprised bunch.

“‘That wasn’t there two minutes ago,’ I heard one of them say. ‘The guy can’t be far away. After him, fellows. Scatter and look for his trail. We’ll show ’em a thing or two.’

“I was out of sight, running through the bushes, stooping low and not making any more noise than I could help, and circling around to get into the brush south of the lake. In a minute they found my tracks; the ground is soft there in the woods and away I went with the whole pack after me. I knew that I never could get away unless I could fool them, so I made a bee-line for Round Lake and, believe me, I didn’t stop to eat any blackberries. I jumped in and swam across, crawled out, letting my footprints show plain; then slipped back into the water without leaving a sign. I swam back and just had time to hide in some bushes when they all came down to the edge of the lake. They didn’t jump in, but divided, part going around one way and part the other. It is only a little way around and in a few minutes I heard a yell and knew that

they had found my tracks on the other side. Then I slipped along through the brush, crossed back of their camp again, and made my way northwest to Mineral Springs. I was circling around toward camp when I heard somebody caw. You know the rest. Say, I am tired."

When he had finished Skinny got up, with his eyes shining.

"What is the matter with Benny Wade?" he shouted.

"He's all right," we yelled back.

Then Bill took it up. "Who's all right?"

"Benny Wade!" we yelled again, and Mr. Norton yelled as loud as anybody.

"I guess Benny has earned a rest until dinner time," said he. "After dinner we will go over and take up that challenge."

CHAPTER XVI

THE GREAT TRACKING CONTEST

JUST before two o'clock we started for Camp Wahob, carrying our patrol banner and keeping step to a drum which Bill had made from the head of a barrel hung around his neck.

"Do you think it safe to go over there after what Benny did to them?" asked Mr. Norton. "Maybe we'd better send an envoy forward to let them know that we have come with peaceful intentions. Captain Miller, will you detail one of your men for the work?"

"Dick, you do it," said Skinny. "Tie your handkerchief to the end of a stick."

"Why not use the Indian sign?" Mr. Norton told him. "Whenever an Indian holds up a branch of a tree it means 'I want to make peace.'"

As soon as we had cut a branch Dick started, following the edge of the lake around, while we waited

for him at the west end. They saw him coming and sent one of the Rattlesnakes to meet him. We watched them shake hands and say something; then Dick came hurrying back.

"They are all ready," he said, "and they say that when it comes to tracking they will show us a thing or two."

"Fall in line," yelled Skinny. "Forward, march. Maybe they will and then again, maybe they won't."

In a few minutes we reached the camp and were talking over the tracking stunt with the boys. We decided to have each patrol choose one member who should make the trail for the other patrol to follow.

The Rattlesnakes chose their patrol leader, George Parker.

"Who is our choice, fellows?" asked Mr. Norton.

"Bill," we all yelled at once. When it comes to running and jumping Bill can beat us all. Skinny is best at tracking and we needed him to follow the trail.

"How about it, Bill?"

"I'll do it, if you want me to, and if they catch

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me they will be good ones. But it is going to be hard work to keep still so long."

"Our plan is this," said Mr. Norton, after talking it over with the other Scoutmaster. "Bill will go south from the camp and George, north, for a run of one hour. Each lad will leave a trail of paper, dropping pieces occasionally, so that the trail may not be entirely lost. The Hyde Park patrol will follow Bill and the Bob's Hill boys will try to catch George. One of our fellows will go with the Hyde Park patrol and one of them with us, to act as judges. The two trailmakers will start at four o'clock and will show up here again, either uncaptured or as prisoners, at five o'clock. Every time the hunters see or hear the trailmaker, they must call out his name and it will count as a point in favor of their side. The game, of course, will be to capture him. How much start shall we give the trailmakers?"

"Ten minutes," somebody said.

"Great snakes!" said Bill. "I'll be halfway to Valparaiso in ten minutes."

"Make it three," said Mr. Shepard, the Chicago

Scoutmaster. "I've been looking around a bit and it is so wild here that in three minutes the boys can get out of sight. We must not make it too hard the first time."

"What will the Scoutmasters do while we are gone?" I asked them.

"We'll be very busy lying around in the shade," laughed Mr. Shepard, "but we shall exert ourselves enough to have supper ready for a lot of hungry Scouts soon after you get back."

That sounded good to Raven Patrol and the Scouts of Rattlesnake Patrol were so tickled that they set up a great rattling, shaking small gourds with shot inside. That was their patrol signal, the noise of a rattlesnake.

"Now, fellows," said George, their patrol leader, "we have nearly an hour to get ready in. What's the matter with going in swimming?"

We came out feeling fresh and cool and ready for anything. At about one minute to four the two Scoutmasters shut each patrol in a separate tent, all except Bill and George, who filled their pockets with little pieces of paper, which had been

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torn from newspapers, and stood ready to start at the signal. I was put in with the Rattlesnakes as judge for our side.

“Go!” yelled Mr. Norton.

I heard somebody pass the tent with a crash and knew that it was George trying to get into Dillingham's Dells before the three minutes were up. Once there, among the ravines and in the woods, it would be easy to give us the slip. Bill had started in the opposite direction and we couldn't hear him at all, except one loud caw at the start. There was an answer from the other tent; then all was still, except the ticking of the watches which some of the Chicago boys were holding. In just three minutes the tent was opened and we hurried out.

“Everybody scatter and look for signs,” yelled Skinny.

I didn't have any time to watch what the Ravens were doing. The Rattlesnakes were making for the wild country, south of the lake, and it hustled me to keep up.

It was easy at the start. Wahob Lake curves around toward the northeast sort of like the new

moon, with marshy ground to the east. South of the horn of the moon were other swamps and a little pond, called Round Lake, the one Benny had swum across when he was getting away, after putting up the message. Between the east end of the lake and the swamps farther east there was a narrow strip of ground, soft but not wet. Bill might have gone to either side and worked his way around toward the south, but I knew that he would go straight across and in among the bushes. The Rattlesnakes knew it, too, and they hurried after him without losing a second, looking for the trail.

But when we reached the other side it was different. We could see one footprint where Bill had tried to jump across a large, soft place and had landed on the farther edge, and that was all we could see except a tangle of almost everything that grows, with now and then a grass-covered spot in between.

The boys went down on their hands and knees and crawled out from the center like spokes from the hub of a wheel, looking for paper and other signs, but not a thing could they find at first. Then,

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after a little, we heard a shout from Phil Evans, the assistant patrol leader of the Rattlesnakes. We all ran over to where he was standing; he pointed to some blackberry bushes, full of big berries which were getting ripe and tempting.

"We'll pick them for supper when we get back," said one of the boys. "We haven't time now."

"Pick nothin'! Where are your eyes? Look there."

There were a lot of dried hulls on the bushes where somebody had been picking the day before and in the middle was a big one, sticking up white and fresh and still moist, showing that someone had picked a large, fat berry not many minutes before.

I knew that Bill had done it; he likes blackberries. He only had taken one, but that one was enough to put those Chicago boys on the trail. After that they began to find pieces of paper; then a broken twig and a place where someone had crashed through a thicket of bushes. The trail led in a zigzag way toward Round Lake.

At the lake we lost it. As we came up a big mud turtle slid from a log where he had been sunning

himself and dropped into the water with a little splash.

"Don't waste any time here, fellows," said Phil. "Nobody has been around here for ten or fifteen minutes, anyhow, or that turtle would not have been there."

After a little search they found the trail again, where Bill had doubled back toward Wahob, then crept through the hazel brush in a wide circle and stopped to eat some more blackberries. After that it was lost for a few minutes and, when looking for it, we came to two cow paths through a swampy place, branching off in different directions.

Right in the middle of one of the paths Bill had drawn a big X, which is an Indian sign, meaning, "This path not to be followed." Under the cross he had drawn a crow, although he had been in such a hurry it didn't look much like one.

"We've got him," yelled Phil. "He can't fool us that way. Come on, fellows."

He dashed down the path that Bill had told us not to follow, with the patrol at his heels. It wound over toward the east and soon there wasn't

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any path at all, only swamp, with no trail and no sign of Bill.

"He must have taken the other one," one of the boys said. And they hurried back to the sign.

Bill had fooled them, all right. He had made up his mind that if he told them the path not to take they would be sure to take it. I've noticed that it often happens that way. If you tell the truth folks will not believe you.

When they struck the trail again on the other side of the swamp they had lost several minutes. They lost the trail a dozen times, but always found it again, until I thought that every minute we should hear or see Bill somewhere. He told me afterwards that we passed him once where he lay in a thicket, waiting for a chance to get away.

Then suddenly we crossed a lane, fenced in and leading down through the woods. On looking down the lane I saw Bill, running along by the fence, trying to find an easy place to get through. The Rattlesnakes saw him at the same time.

"Bill, Bill!" they yelled.

Bill heard them and looked back. He shook his

fist at them, gave one fierce caw, slipped through the fence, and was gone.

"You chump!" I shouted, for I couldn't help it, even if I was judge. "That gives them two points. Why couldn't you keep your mouth shut?"

Phil grinned. "We've got him this time," he said. "We don't need any trail."

But they did, just the same, for a minute later they came to two more paths branching off like the others. Bill didn't have any time to spare, but he had stopped long enough to put two stones in the middle of one of the paths, a small one on top of a larger one.

It was an Indian sign, meaning, "This is the trail," and was the one Bill used on his way to Greylock that time when he sprained his ankle on the mountain and was lost for two days before we saw his smoke signals and found him.

"You are crazy," I said to myself. "You never can fool 'em twice in the same way." Phil was thinking the same thing.

"Half go one way and half the other," he called. "We'll take no chances this time."

That is what they did, but there was no sign of Bill. We found that he hadn't taken either path, but had crawled through some bushes to one side until he had entered the woods again and was out of sight; then he had made a run for it. We could follow his track easily, after we found it, for he hadn't tried to hide it, and we could see his footprints in the soft ground in the woods. I could tell by looking at them that he had been running.

I knew in a minute what he was up to. He was running for Long Lake, trying to get far enough ahead to give him time to swim across. Then he would make his way down on the west side of the lake and back to Camp Wahob.

The Rattlesnakes didn't know that the lake was so near, but they hurried along so fast I knew that Bill would not have time to get across. Bill is a good swimmer, but we were coming out on the lake at the widest part, and it takes time to swim across, no matter how good a swimmer you are. Not many would dare try it.

"They can't catch him," I thought, "but they will

see him, and that will mean another point against us."

The tracks took us straight through the woods and down to the water's edge, just as I had expected. I even could see where Bill had waded in with a rush and I looked out over the water, thinking to see his head bobbing along halfway across.

There wasn't a sign of anything on the lake, not even a boat. But coming in toward shore, in widening circles, were little waves, showing that something had been out there and only a moment before had sunk into the water out of sight.

It scared me. It seemed as if I could see Bill, lying at the bottom of the lake, gasping for breath and swallowing water instead of air. It was awful and made me feel faint and sick.

"He's had a cramp," I moaned, pointing to the circling wave coming toward shore. "He's the best swimmer in the whole patrol, but he was too hot to go in and now he is drowned."

We all stood there, thinking the same thing. Phil looked into my face once to see whether I was trying to fool them, but he could tell that I was frightened.

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I hardly could stand for a minute when I thought of the terrible thing that had happened.

“We’ll save him if we can,” said Phil.

Then he turned to the other Rattlesnakes. “Numbers 3 and 4, you are the best divers; come with me. We’ll find a boat somewhere along the shore. The rest of you watch to see if he comes up. If he does, go after him, and get him, too.”

CHAPTER XVII

THE RAVENS MAKE GOOD THEIR "DEFI"

IT seemed like an age that we stood there, sick at heart, watching for Bill to come up and waiting for the boat. The wave broke upon the shore in little ripples that left the lake like a looking-glass, showing the sky and passing clouds but no signs of a swimmer struggling with cramp.

I suppose that it was not more than two minutes, or three, but I didn't know it. I was almost crazy. Bill's mother had not wanted him to go. He teased so hard that she gave in, but she took me to one side before we started.

"John," she said, "you may be just as harum-scarum as these other boys, but it seems to me that you are a little less reckless. I know that you are not so reckless as Willie and I won't let him go a step unless you promise to watch over him and keep him out of mischief."

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I promised. I had to; there was nothing else to do. But all the time I knew that Ma was hoping that Bill, or somebody else, would keep me out of trouble.

"Nothing is going to happen to him," I told her. "Mr. Norton will be along and he will keep us all straight. Besides, Bill isn't as reckless as he used to be. Getting lost on Greylock and spraining his ankle was a good lesson to him."

Now he was drowning out there in the lake, somewhere. I couldn't stand it any longer.

"Pick me up with the boat," I told the boys. "I can't swim across."

Kicking off my shoes, I plunged in, swimming as I never had swum before. I hadn't gone more than a hundred feet when I heard Phil give a shout.

"Come back, Pedro," he yelled. "Here's Bill's tracks coming up out of the water."

I turned and swam back again as fast as I could to where the whole patrol were standing on the shore.

"You will have to catch up," they shouted. "We can't wait."

They started off with a rush, and a minute or two later I started after them. I could see as plain as day where Bill had walked up out of the water. He had fooled us all by swimming out into the lake, then north along the shore, and out again. There was no telling how far he had gone, for the Rattlesnakes had lost many precious minutes.

"I didn't mean to fool you, Phil; honest," I said, after I had caught up with them. "I thought that he was a goner."

"I know that you didn't," he told me. "We were all fooled. Bill is a Jim-dandy and no mistake."

All this time we were hurrying on as fast as we could follow the trail, until, down below, it led us into the lake again at a place where it narrows down like a river opposite Camp Bob's Hill. This time the Rattlesnakes looked up and down the shore for tracks, but Bill had crossed and there was nothing for us to do but swim across after him.

We struck the trail on the other side, but we didn't see Bill until we found him at five o'clock talking with Mr. Norton and Mr. Shepard at Camp

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Wahob, tired but happy. He had been the first one back.

He wasn't far ahead of the others. In less than a minute, we found out afterwards, he caught sight of George, the Hyde Park trailmaker, coming down the road toward camp on a run and after him, not far behind, ran the Ravens. There was no need for a trail, for George was in sight all the time. If the camp had been farther away they would have caught him.

"Whew! That was some run!" he exclaimed, mopping his forehead, as he threw himself down on the grass.

"How did you let them get so close?" asked Mr. Shepard.

"I couldn't help it. They knew all the short cuts."

They didn't have time to say any more just then, for Skinny and the other Ravens came puffing up and they could see the Rattlesnakes hurrying around the end of the lake.

"Caw!" yelled the Ravens, when they saw the Hyde Park Scouts running toward camp.

"Rattle, rattle," went the Rattlesnakes.

I kept still. I couldn't rattle because it is against Scout rules to use another patrol's signal; besides, I didn't have anything to do it with, and it didn't seem polite to caw. I was all out of breath, anyhow.

"Right on time," said Mr. Shepard, as we came up. "That is what I call good work. You seem sort of wet."

"Bill fell in the lake," said Phil, winking at me, "and we had to go in after him."

"I noticed that he was wet. My advice is for you all to take a good rub-down before supper. Put your clothes out in the sun; it is still hot enough to dry them in a few minutes."

"I'm 'most dry now," Bill told him, "but the rub-down will be all right."

"Well, John," said Mr. Norton, when we had come out of the tents, "what sort of trackers did you find these city chaps to be?"

"They are great," I told him. "I didn't think that they would come within gunshot of Bill, but he had to hide to keep away from them. They saw

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him once and the bonehead had to stop and yell. That counted two points against us."

"Nobody at home!" groaned Skinny.

"Well, a fellow has to yell once in a while, or bust," said Bill.

"And how about the Ravens?" asked Mr. Shepard of the Scout who had gone with them as judge.

"They are wonders," said he. "They seemed to know just what George would do next every time. We got near enough to hear him several times and we saw him twice before that last sprint down the road. He was in sight all of the way then."

"I couldn't help it," George said. "It was supper time. Besides, I knew that if I didn't run like sixty they would catch me."

"You have all earned your suppers," Mr. Shepard told us. "So draw up and get busy. Mr. Norton and I will do the honors. After supper you can have all the time you need to tell how it happened."

Bill told first about making the trail and Phil told about tracking him. It tickled the Ravens when

they heard how we were afraid that Bill had been drowned, when he hadn't thought of such a thing.

"You couldn't drown Bill if you tried," said Hank.

Then Skinny told about tracking George, and George started to tell how he had kept away from them.

"Wait!" said Skinny. Then he turned to me. "The secretary will put it in the minutes of the meetin'."

I am going to put it in just as if I had seen it myself, which I couldn't have done, of course, for I was with the other bunch.

When Mr. Norton shouted "Go!" George made a grand rush, in order to get away as far as he could before the three minutes were up.

"I was sure that it wouldn't be easy," he said, "because the Ravens knew the ground better than we did. Besides, they were brought up in the country, while we live in a big city. If you'd start to do any tracking in Chicago, the cops would get after you."

In order that you may know just where George

made the trail I'll have to tell about the country north of Wahob Lake. The land is very rough there. Some of the farms look like the farms in Massachusetts, with sloping fields and sort of hilly in places. The old glacier, which Mr. Norton told us about, did it. The Valparaiso-Chesterton wagon road, which runs north and south some distance to the east of Wahob Lake, was laid out along the top of a ridge. That ridge is a watershed between the waters of the Mississippi and St. Lawrence Rivers.

This rough country extends all the way from Flint Lake to Woodville, about a mile and a half or two miles north of Wahob. A great deal of it is covered with woods and a little north of Wahob a half-dozen or more pretty ravines wind through the woods sort of east and west. These are called Dillingham's Dells. The electric railroad cuts these dells in the middle, crossing on great fills which kind of spoil them, although I suppose that the railroad folks couldn't help it.

North of the dells come the sloping farms that I told about; then more woods. The hill, which

they call Mt. Moriah, is there, west of the track. Then come Mineral Springs and, beyond the springs, Vincent's woods reach almost to Woodville.

The Ravens knew all about that country, just as George had said. We had tramped through it many times. Mr. Norton liked to take us to Vincent's woods; there are so many kinds of trees there. He made us study them, so that we would know what they were, wherever we might see them, and know the shape of their leaves and the look of their bark.

George led the Ravens a chase through that country. They saw him once or twice and got near enough to hear him several times, in among the dells. George finally circled around to the south and back through Anderson's gully, where we had the trouble with the bull. Skinny was sure that they would find George up a tree, but Mr. Anderson had Calamity tied up.

When the stories had been finished, Mr. Shepard spoke up.

"We thought that we were pretty good at tracking," he said, "but we will have to admit that the

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Ravens had a little the best of us. How about it, fellows?"

"They did and no mistake," George told him, "but we'll try it again after we have been here longer and then, maybe, it will be a different story."

That night we had a big campfire on the beach and Mr. Norton and Mr. Shepard told us stories.

"I'll tell you what is in my mind," said Mr. Norton, as we were getting ready to go back to Camp Bob's Hill. "We Massachusetts fellows haven't many more days to stay here, and before we go I want to take my boys over to Gary and through the great steel mills which have grown up there like magic. This is an age of steel and steel enters into the construction of so many things that I think every boy ought to know how it is made. Will the Rattlesnakes go with us?"

There was great rattling for a minute.

"I have had the same thing in mind," said Mr. Shepard, "and we shall be very glad to go."

"Very well. I already have asked for a permit and as soon as it comes we will go over."

CHAPTER XVIII

BOILING A RAILROAD

AFTER supper the next evening, when the sun had gone down and a cool breeze from Lake Michigan had driven away the heat of the day, we hiked down the railroad track to the north end of Long Lake and crossed over between Long and Canada Lakes to the Valparaiso-Chesterton highway. Then we followed the highway until we came to Vincent's farm, east of Mineral Springs. This is one of the hilly farms I have told about.

From the top of the slope we could look west and see a flame, leaping up in the distance, and the light of other fires. The clouds above were crimson, like when some farmhouse is burning at night and all you can see is the reflection on the sky.

"Great snakes!" shouted Bill. "There is a fire somewhere. Come on."

"That fire is sixteen miles away," Mr. Norton

told us, "a little too far for us to walk to-night. What you see are the fires of the steel mills in Gary."

"Are they burning up?"

"Not a bit of it. That big flame shooting into the air is burning gas at the coke ovens. In making coke they release more gas than they can use and set fire to it to get rid of it. Enough gas is being wasted there to light a large city. The other fires which you see are from the blast furnaces, where they are smelting iron ore.

"I have brought you here to-night to tell you something about those great mills over there, which we will visit in a day or two. Instead of our usual campfire, we will find seats on the grass where we can watch those fires of Gary and talk. You will enjoy your trip more and learn more if you first find out something about what you are going to see. What is the most useful metal, Skinny?"

"Gold," said Skinny, right off the bat. "We found a lot of gold pieces once where a hermit had buried them, part way up Greylock, near the Bel-lows Pipe. That was before we knew you. We

took one of them to a drug store afterward and got all kinds of soda water."

"That was being useful and no mistake."

"Yep—we came near getting run in for it. You see, the soda water man thought that we had stolen the money, but we wouldn't do such a thing. You bet it surprised him some. He had to go out and get the change; didn't have enough in his store. We paralyzed him, all right."

"Gold is a good thing to have, particularly in the soda water season. However, we could get along without it, and use something else for money, if we had to. But there is one metal which we use and need every day of our lives and almost every minute in the day. Without it we should be living like savages and would have to do without much that makes life worth living."

"Guess what," said Benny. "It's iron."

"That's right, iron and steel, and it is a good thing to learn something about a metal like that. There was a time when the world didn't know anything about iron. It isn't found in a natural state, like some metals, but it combines with other things.

It is dug out of the ground like so much dirt, or rock, and does not look anything like iron. On that account, probably, it took a long time to find out about it. When at last the world learned what it was and how to use it, the event was epoch-making and ushered in what we call the iron age. It would be hard now for us to imagine a world without iron, although in what we call the stone age the savage people knew nothing of iron."

"We are getting along in camp without much iron," Benny told him, "except, of course, our cooking things."

"It seems to me that is quite an important exception. I'd like to try an experiment, if you do not mind. Here is Bill, who is very much of a boy from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet. I am curious to see how much iron there is about him—iron and steel. Come, Bill, turn out your pockets. Let us see what is in them."

Bill spread his handkerchief on the grass and began to pull things out of his pockets, Mr. Norton keeping count. When he had finished, this is what we found: a cork with four fish hooks stuck in it,

a horseshoe nail, a piece of wire, a three-bladed knife, an old key, a dollar watch with steel springs, and an iron ring which he was wearing to keep off rheumatism.

"I don't see any gold," said Mr. Norton, "but you will notice how important iron is to boys. In addition to his interesting collection, Bill seems to have considerable iron in his constitution."

"Guess what," said Benny. "'Tain't iron; it's sand."

"There is a great deal of iron in the earth, although only in certain places is there enough to make mining pay. I suppose that you have noticed how the stones are streaked with reddish-brown down there at Mineral Springs. The stain was caused by iron in the water. The peculiar taste of the water is partly due to iron. The iron ore used in Gary comes from mines up near Lake Superior. In some places the ore is so near the surface that it can be dug up with great steam shovels very rapidly and cheaply. In others, it is farther underground. The ore is loaded on to dump cars which are pretty much iron,—a train load at a time,—and

hauled by an iron locomotive on a steel track to the lake shore, where it is dumped into huge chutes, probably made of iron. Then immense steel boats go up under the chutes and the ore is dropped into them, nine thousand tons in a boat and sometimes more. It takes only a few hours and costs almost nothing to load a steamer in that way. Then the boat starts for Gary and arrives there in about three days. When we go over we shall see the wonderful unloading machines, almost human, dipping down into some ore steamer and lifting out its cargo of ore.

"This ore is not a mixture of iron and other things, as you would mix ashes and garden soil, for example. It is what is called a chemical combination that changes it into something else. Let Bill leave his knife out in the rain, or dew, and he will find out what I mean. A reddish-brown substance will form on the blade."

"Rust," said Bill.

"That is what we would call it, and it wouldn't look much like the polished steel blade that Bill is so proud of, but, just the same, rust is a chemical

compound of iron and one of the gases in the air which we call oxygen. The scientific name for what we call rust is oxide of iron."

"Rust for mine," Skinny told him. "I don't think much of this ox-hide business."

"The first thing which the steel company has to do is to free the iron from that chemical compound which we call ore. This is done in blast furnaces. I will tell you how after we go over. The process is called smelting.

"After smelting, the iron is changed into various kinds of steel and this steel afterwards is made into a wonderful variety of articles which men and boys require, from steel rails to the tiny hairspring in a watch. I'll tell you about that when we visit the mills, but we have had enough of it for to-night. Let's go back to camp."

Gary is a queer kind of city. In the first place, it isn't much more than half as old as we boys are. Our house at home, at the foot of Bob's Hill, is ten times as old, maybe more. The Bible tells how you oughtn't to build your house on the sand, but Gary was built right in the sand. When

folks want to raise flowers or grass, or have gardens, they bring in dirt from somewhere else. Some of the dirt is brought from as far away as Ohio and some from Illinois. Skinny says that he doesn't see how people can tell where they live, because maybe they are living on Illinois soil and maybe on Ohio, and all the time thinking that it is Indiana.

The people in the streets talk all kinds of queer foreign languages; more than half the people are foreigners. Their talk sounds like when Skinny makes up a lot of Indian words. Mr. Norton says that Gary is the meeting place of all the nations of the earth and that there are as many as forty nationalities there, counting Americans and Negroes.

Two rivers flow through the city, called Grand Calumet and Little Calumet, but they are really the same river and there is nothing very grand about it, either. This river flows west through the southern part of the city and crosses over into Illinois; then it changes its mind and flows back again through the northern part of the city, or used to, but the place where it emptied into Lake Michigan, among the sand dunes, has filled up with sand and now it

doesn't do much of any flowing at all, but has a big outlet into Lake Michigan at South Chicago, which has been dug out and made big enough for steamboats. When the people who run the steel mills don't like the way the river runs, they move it somewhere else.

But the queerest thing of all is the schools. More men go to school nights than boys do in the daytime, and they have school on Saturdays and in the summer time. The children don't have to go Saturdays unless they want to, but they do go, just the same, a lot of them. I can't understand it. Bill Wilson says that anybody must be crazy who would go to school on Saturday or during the summer vacation.

Anyhow, we learned a lot going through the steel mills. First, Mr. Norton showed us the harbor, reaching in from Lake Michigan. There we found two big ore boats being unloaded. The ore was being dumped into great piles which looked like heaps of rust, or reddish-yellow dirt.

"I don't see how they make iron out of that stuff," I said.

"It is just as I told you the other night," Mr. Norton explained. "They do not make the iron. It is already there in combination with other things. The thing to do is to get the iron loose, away from the other things and by itself. This is done by heat, and a gas, formed by half-burning coke, which combines with the oxygen in the ore. There are eight blast furnaces for this purpose. They are huge, vertical, steel-covered cylinders, lined with fire brick. The fuel used is coke, which is put in at the top, together with the iron ore and limestone. Watch for a minute and you will see little loaded cars traveling up to the top, to be dumped in."

"What is the limestone for?" somebody asked.

"It is this way: a blast of hot air is blown through the burning coke in the furnace, much as you would blow air through a fire with bellows, only the furnace blast is heated first. It makes a fierce fire and causes intense heat, nearly ten times as hot as boiling water. The effect of this great heat on the ore is to drive out the oxygen, carbon, and other things and set the iron free. Some of these impurities are drawn off in the form of gas; others com-

bine with the lime and make what is called slag. The liquid iron, being heaviest, collects at the bottom of the furnace and the liquid slag floats on top, like cream on a pan of milk."

"How do they get it out?"

"By taking a plug out of the furnace. When they want to draw off the slag they take out the upper plug and when they want iron, the lower plug. Watch what that workman is doing."

The man was jabbing at the furnace with a long rod. Suddenly there came a stream of white-hot slag, which sent out showers of sparks and flowed down a trough made in sand, and finally into an iron tub or ladle. Afterwards we saw the iron flow out in much the same way into big kettles, which they hustled across to the "open hearth" steel furnaces before it could get cool.

"Say," said Skinny to one of the open-hearth men, "it is some hot in there."

"Only about four thousand degrees," he told us.

"Why do you have to get it so hot?"

"You see, we have to boil the iron, until we boil, or burn, all the impurities out of it. It takes more

heat to boil iron than it does to boil water. When the iron comes over here from the blast furnace it is not pure."

"Is steel the same as pure iron?"

"No; steel is a mixture of iron and other things, principally carbon. There are various kinds of steel, ranging from the coarse kind from which steel rails and the great, rough girders for buildings are made, to the fine steel used in razor blades and other fine-edged tools. The chief difference is in the amount of carbon which the steel contains. When we get orders from people, they tell us how much carbon to put in, depending on what they want to use the steel for. Sometimes a little copper is added. Steel containing copper does not rust so easily.

"Here at these mills, for example, we make, among other things, car axles, car springs, rails, and soft steel for tie plates. The steel for all these contains different amounts of carbon. Car springs require the most; then come axles; then rails, and least of all, tie plates."

"What are tie plates?" Benny asked.

"They are steel plates which are put between the

tie and the rail in railroad building. Only a little carbon is put in, in order that there may be some 'give' to them."

"How do you know how much carbon is left in the iron when it comes over from the blast furnace?" Mr. Norton asked him.

"We don't know. We first burn it all out; then we can put in exactly as much as is wanted. We call it 'recarburizing.'"

"How do you add the carbon?"

"It is very simple. We throw ordinary hard coal into the furnace. Anthracite coal, you know, is over ninety per cent carbon. It is all weighed out in bags, ready for use, and we throw in as many bags as are necessary. Watch; they are going to tap that furnace."

A man was jabbing at it, much as had been done at the blast furnace. Suddenly the air was filled with sparks and a great light almost blinded us. A white-hot stream of liquid steel poured out like water and then formed wonderful, dazzling falls as it dropped into a great kettle. In a few minutes a big traveling crane lifted up the kettle and swung

it over to where some huge iron molds were standing.

"There goes a railroad, fellows," shouted Mr. Shepard, as the kettle was tipped, filling one mold after another.

It was great and it was scary. We afterwards saw the molds taken off, leaving columns of red-hot steel, called "ingots," standing on end and sending out so much heat that they almost burned us as they passed on little trains of flat cars.

Other great cranes lifted them and lowered them into fiery holes, called "soaking pits," where they were left to heat some more, and more evenly. Best of all was the rolling mill, where all the machinery seemed to be running alone without any men around. Two or three were standing near, but they didn't seem to be doing much. A crane swung over, lifted an ingot out of the soaking pit, placed it on an electric car, which moved over in front of the first rolling machine. Then the ingot tipped itself over into the machine and started through a lot of rollers, without anybody touching it at all. We walked along, watching it grow longer and longer

and smaller and smaller, until in about five minutes at the farther end of the mill there came a regular Fourth of July celebration, with sparks flying to beat the band. Then, instead of an ingot, seven rails dropped out.

We were tired when we went back to camp that night. I dreamed of a boiling railroad, down which we floated in boats, back to Bob's Hill. It dazzled our eyes and was so hot that we hardly could stand it. When I woke up the sun was shining in my face.

"Come on, fellows," I heard Mr. Norton say. "Let's get busy. It is going to be a warm day and we have many things to do."

CHAPTER XIX

“TWO O’CLOCK AND ALL’S WELL”

“WELL, boys,” said Mr. Norton, “how about going home?”

We were sitting around the campfire one evening, some days after our trip to Gary, talking about our folks, wondering what they were doing and whether they missed us any.

“I have finished my business in Chicago very satisfactorily,” he went on, “and I have had a good rest, the very best kind of a rest—a life out of doors, on the water or in the woods. I certainly feel like a new man and a better one. It is very delightful here, but I, for one, must be getting back to work. How about it, Mr. Secretary? Doesn’t your mother’s woodbox need filling? July is almost gone.”

Everybody laughed at that. Our woodbox is always getting empty. No matter how much the fel-

lows need me in some game or to hold a meeting, they usually have to wait while I fill the woodbox. You see, we have a wood-lot at home up on East Mountain, near Savoy, and we burn the wood in our kitchen stove.

“ I filled it three feet above the top before I left,” I told him. “ I had a letter from Ma yesterday and she thought that it was about time to be getting back.”

“ We have had the time of our lives,” said Skinny, “ and we want to spend a part of our vacation on Bob's Hill and in our cave at Peck's Falls, but we haven't saved anybody from drowning yet, although I have watched the lake every day. There ain't much chance to do the rescue act at home. You couldn't drown in Hoosac River if you tried.”

“ You could in the mill race,” Benny told him. “ A boy did once.”

“ Great snakes!” said Bill. “ Maybe I wouldn't like to see our cave. Skinny's cave in Anderson's gully ain't any good. I wouldn't give five cents a dozen for caves like that. I'll bet that our cave at

Peck's Falls has filled up or something, we have been gone so long."

"Suppose that we take a vote on it. There are some things to be done before we leave, one thing in particular. To-morrow will be Tuesday. The train from Valparaiso, Friday morning, will get us home about noon Saturday. Those who are in favor of going Friday morning will caw when the secretary calls your names."

Everybody cawed except Skinny. He wouldn't do it because there hadn't been anybody drowned yet.

"What is there to do besides packing up?" I asked.

"What I had in mind was this: Mrs. Laurence has given us a number of good times and you have made some delightful acquaintances among the girls at the Flint Lake cottages. What I propose is that we entertain them before we go. We are not very well fixed to serve dinner to so many, but we could invite them for the afternoon and serve ice cream, cake, and lemonade, and I believe that they would enjoy visiting the camp. What do you say?"

“ I think that it would be fun,” said Bill.

“ It would be fun,” I told him, “ but what would they eat and drink out of? We haven't dishes enough for so many.”

“ Maybe we could hire some dishes in town.”

“ Make each one bring a cup and saucer and spoon,” said Skinny, after thinking a moment. “ My mother did that once. It won't hurt 'em any and it will help us a lot. They can drink out of the cups and eat out of the saucers.”

“ Nobly spoken. I really believe that our talented young patrol leader has solved the problem. I am sure the ladies would be willing to help us that much, particularly if we promise to wash the dishes.”

“ We could cook some eggs if we wanted to,” said Hank. “ I can cook them fine with their jackets on.”

“ Boys,” said Mr. Norton, “ with all respect for Hank's cooking, I must say that the thought of eggs is not so pleasing as it was when we first came. I have eaten so many that I am ashamed to look a hen in the face. While I think that we have done

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very well in the cooking line, it is too big a contract to undertake to cook for such a crowd—good cooks, probably, every one of them."

"Guess what," said Benny, "why not have the Rattlesnakes, too? They are good fellows and they gave us something to eat that time. We are going away, anyhow," he went on, turning to Skinny, "so that it needn't make any difference about the girls."

"Good idea," Mr. Norton told him. "I was going to suggest it, myself. But we must make them all understand, boys and girls both, that they are to come early in the afternoon, after dinner, and that they must go home before supper. If we don't we are going to get ourselves into trouble."

That was the way we fixed it, and we hardly could wait until morning to find out whether the girls could come over that afternoon. We knew that the Rattlesnakes would come.

"We'll start at one o'clock," Mr. Shepard told us, after talking it over with his patrol, "and we will make a game of it, if you are willing. The Ravens will be one army and the Rattlesnakes, the

enemy. We'll agree on a division line to show where your territory begins. The game will be for our fellows to try to get into your country before two o'clock without being seen. As soon as any Raven on watch sees one of us, he must call out his name. The invading Scout then will be 'dead' and out of the game."

Say, that is a great game. We had so much fun playing it that we almost forgot about the girls.

We fixed on a dividing line between the country of the Rattlesnakes and the country of the Ravens, and when one o'clock came Skinny posted us at different points to watch. Mr. Norton had gone to Lake View station for the ice cream and other stuff which we had arranged to have sent up on the noon car.

The way in which we had been placed, I didn't see how anybody could get into our country without our seeing him. I made up my mind, anyhow, that they wouldn't get by me. It began to look as if they were not going to try, for I could hear the other Ravens yelling out a name every once in a while as they picked off the enemy.

"Watch sharp, Pedro," called Skinny; "we've got five out of the eight."

I was on the east border line, where I could watch the lake on one side and a long stretch across our front.

"There is nobody in sight," I called to Skinny, "but somebody's boat is loose. The wind is taking it down the lake this way."

"Can't you get hold of it? We will need another boat for the girls."

"It is too far out, unless I swim, and I don't want to get wet on account of the party."

"Gee! I wish I had my rope. Keep your eye on the boat and we'll get it later."

"Say, Skinny," I called after a few moments, "the wind is blowing from the south."

"Never mind about the wind. The Rattlesnakes are blowing from the north, all right. What of it, anyhow?"

"Nothing much; only that boat is coming against the wind."

"Must be a current or something. Look out now, or they will get past you."

I kept looking at that boat, floating down the lake against the wind, and I couldn't understand it.

“Watch my place, Skinny,” I called, finally. “I am going after that boat. There is something funny about it.”

I hurried back to where one of our boats was tied and soon was pulling toward the empty boat, keeping watch over my shoulder the best I could.

The boat was coming along at pretty good speed and almost had floated into our country before I drew up alongside. Then I saw what made it go against the wind. A hand had hold of one end and somebody's head was bobbing along with only the face out of water. I took one look and was just in time.

“George!” I yelled, and George was “dead” a few feet from the boundary line.

Just then one of the other Scouts caught somebody.

“Seven are gone,” called Skinny. “The other one is Phil. He's a foxy guy, but keep him out a few minutes longer and we'll win. There goes the

car. It is due in Valparaiso at two o'clock and it is a few minutes late."

The interurban car was passing the camp as he spoke. I could see a handkerchief fluttering out of one of the windows, but I couldn't tell who was waving.

"There is some girl waving to you, Skinny," I told him.

"They will do it," he said, grinning. "'Tain't my fault that I am rich and handsome."

"Oh, shucks! She's gone, anyhow, and if you don't stop staring down the track Phil will slip in on us; then where will we be?"

"If he slips past me, he's a dandy. It's 'most two o'clock—— Say, there they come, and we dassn't leave to meet them."

We could hear the girls coming along the lake shore, south of the camp, laughing and talking, but we could not see them on account of the trees and bushes. Skinny held his watch a minute, waiting, while the voices came nearer and nearer.

"That old turnip of yours is slow, Skinny," called Bill. "I 'most know it is. We've got to quit; that's

all there is about it. They will be in sight in half a minute.”

Skinny gave another look at the bushes, from behind which we could hear the girls coming, then put his watch back in his pocket.

“Two o’clock,” he shouted, “and all’s well!” like they do in real armies.

“Two o’clock,” I yelled, “and all’s well!”

The other boys took it up, and all down the line we could hear the shouts, “Two o’clock and all’s well!”

Just then we heard a boy’s voice back of the bushes repeat:

“Two o’clock and all’s well, and don’t you forget it. Say, if you guys are looking for me, you are looking in the wrong direction.”

You could have knocked me down with a feather, for there was Phil walking toward us with Alice Laurence, and there was a bunch of other girls all around him, laughing at us. It ’most made Skinny mad.

“You see,” Phil went on, “I felt so tired after eating dinner that I came on the car. They wouldn’t

stop for me at Camp Bob's Hill and I had to go on to Lake View. The girls came along just then, and here we are."

"Was that you, waving to Skinny out of the car window?" I asked him.

"Sure. Why not? He was looking for me and I wanted him to know that I was passing."

Skinny glanced over at me and made a motion as if he wanted to lasso somebody, only he didn't have his rope. We hadn't thought of that way of getting into our country, or we should have placed someone at North Wood station to guard against it.

"Well, fellows," laughed Mr. Norton, "Phil seems to have outwitted you and the Rattlesnakes have won. Now, let us make our guests welcome."

They had a good time, all right; it was easy to see that. First, we showed them everything in the camp and they were interested, especially Mrs. Lawrence.

"That oven looks good to me," she said. "It may not be quite so convenient as a kitchen range, but I believe that it will do the business."

"It has provided daily bread for these husky

boys, not to mention myself,” Mr. Norton told her, “and they look as if it had agreed with them.”

After they had seen everything in camp worth seeing, we gave them reserved seats on the grass, where it slopes down to the lake, and had some boat races between the Ravens and Rattlesnakes. The Rattlesnakes beat us every time. They had had more practice, just as we had done more scouting and tracking.

Finally, Mr. Shepard tossed a large rubber ball on to the grass.

“You fellows from the effete East,” said he, winking at Mr. Norton, “have had a great deal to say about playing ball. Here is your chance to make good.”

“What did he say about our feet, Pedro?” Benny whispered.

Before I could answer, Skinny, who had been eying the ball in disgust, spoke up.

“We wouldn’t look at a ball like that at home, Mr. Shepard,” said he. “That kind of ball is for babies. Here is the kind that we use.”

He went into the tent and brought out a regula-

tion league ball. The Ravens thought more of that ball than almost anything else we had and had paid a dollar and a quarter for it before leaving home.

Mr. Shepard nearly had a fit, laughing. "I thought I should get a rise out of Skinny," he said, as soon as he could speak. "To tell the truth," he went on, "we usually play with a league ball ourselves, but someone told me the other day about a game called Water Baseball. It is played in the water much the same as ordinary baseball, only we fix floats for bases and the players swim from one to the other. A league ball would not do at all. This rubber ball is light; it is water-tight, and will float on the surface of the water. It cannot get away from us. What do you say? Shall we try it? Would you girls like to see the game?"

There was great shouting and clapping of hands at that.

"Very well, then. You fellows get into your bathing suits, while Mr. Norton and I fix the bases. I don't know exactly how the game is played, but we'll try it by anchoring boards for bases and will do the best we can. We'll play five innings."

You never saw such splashing or heard such yelling as when the game had fairly started, and some of the yelling was done by the girls on shore.

The Rattlesnakes went to bat first and I thought that we never should get them out, but after a time we had our chance and we made the water fly, even if we didn't do much to the ball. As the game went on, first one side, then the other was ahead; then, at the very end, it was a tie, with the bases full and Skinny's turn to bat.

He was sitting on the shore, resting and looking anxious, when Mr. Shepard called his name. We all were anxious and the girls were the most excited of all.

“Oh, Skinny,” I heard Alice Laurence call in a low voice, so that the team in the water would not hear.

Skinny looked around, then went back toward where she was standing to see what she wanted. She stepped forward to meet him, and before we could guess what was going to happen, pinned a big, black crow to his shirt front.

"Skinny Miller," said she, with her eyes shining and her cheeks as red as fire, "if you don't win that game I'll never let you pull me out of a canyon again, and maybe I won't speak to you."

Say, you ought to have seen Skinny when she said that. He gave her one look, then squared his shoulders and plunged into the lake. I knew that if he didn't knock that ball over into Canada Lake it wouldn't be because he didn't try his best.

The very first ball that was pitched he struck at so hard that he splashed into the water out of sight. If he had hit it, the game would have been won right there; but he missed.

We all gave a groan, standing on the shore, watching.

"Remember!" shouted Alice, loud this time, after two strikes had been called.

Then Skinny smashed it. The ball flew over between the short stop and second base. The left fielder grabbed for it, but it slipped out of his hands and went spinning across the water.

"Swim," we yelled. "Swim for your life."

Skinny started for first base, making the water



SHE STEPPED FORWARD AND PINNED A BIG BLACK CROW ON HIS SHIRT

fly in all directions. Bill, who was on third, gave one yell and put for “home,” spouting water like a whale. Down the lake came the ball toward home base, we almost holding out breath. It fell short. The catcher swam after it and then back to the base as fast as he could, but you have to go some to beat Bill Wilson swimming. There was an anxious moment; then:

“Safe!” called the umpire. The Ravens had won.

“I am afraid that you boys will not appreciate this ice cream,” said Mr. Norton, when we were passing saucers of it after the game. “The water must have cooled you off, but I am sure the girls will welcome it.”

“Leave it to us,” George told him, and I knew from the way Bill was eying every dish that he passed, there wouldn't be any wasted.

Raven Patrol never will forget that afternoon and I don't think the Rattlesnakes will, either. We knew that Mrs. Laurence and the girls were having a good time because they wouldn't go home. It made Mr. Norton anxious, when six o'clock drew

near and nobody gave any signs of leaving. He took me to one side.

"Did you make it plain to them, John," he asked, "that they were invited only for the afternoon and were expected to go home before supper?"

"Yes, sir," I told him. "There couldn't have been any mistake about it."

"Well, what shall we do? We can't very well send them home and we haven't enough food in the camp for so many, except coffee and bread and butter, to say nothing about not having dishes."

"We have cups and saucers," I told him. "The folks brought them. All we need do is to wash them. It will be easy to get eggs at some farmhouse. You don't need plates for hard-boiled eggs, or for bread and butter."

"Eggs!" groaned Mr. Norton. "But I don't see any other way out of it. You have a versatile mind, John, and no mistake. No wonder the boys made you secretary. We'll give them fifteen minutes more and then, if they don't start, when I give the signal you slip quietly out with one of the other boys and get four or five dozen eggs some-

where, and go in a hurry. You'd better make it six dozen. We've got to eat something. Every one of those boys will want three apiece. And go up to the huckleberry marsh and see if Mr. Dillingham can spare five or six quarts of berries.”

It seemed to me as if Mrs. Laurence was getting almost as nervous as Mr. Norton. She kept gazing out toward the lake and sometimes walking down to the shore, but sort of smiling to herself whenever she caught Mr. Norton looking at his watch.

Suddenly, just as Benny and I were going to start after the eggs, I saw her face clear like when a cloud lifts from Greylock back home, leaving the mountain smiling down at us. I watched to see what she was looking at. A boat was coming down the lake, with a man in it, rowing for all he was worth.

When the boat had drawn up to our little pier, I thought that he never would get through handing out baskets, while all the girls laughed and clapped their hands to see how surprised we were.

“Friends,” said Mrs. Laurence, “this is a little surprise from all of us girls. We feared that we

should be having such a good time that we might forget to go home and so left word to have a picnic lunch for the whole crowd brought here at six o'clock."

"Pedro," whispered Mr. Norton, "you needn't go after those eggs."

"Is it?" yelled Skinny, dancing around while the baskets were being unpacked on our table. "Is it? *It is,*" he shouted. "Fried chicken till you can't rest! What do you know about it, fellers?"

Wednesday was a glorious day, and as it was to be our last free day in camp, for Thursday we should be packing up, we made the most of it. We said good-by to all the places and all the people we had grown fond of during the month we had spent there, and when night came we were too tired even to light a campfire. We lay around on the shore, talking about Bob's Hill and listening to the music from the hotel across the lake, and watching the little ferry-boat crossing back and forth.

Mr. Norton had gone to spend the evening with some friends, telling us not to sit up for him as he wouldn't get back until late. We were glad enough

to turn in early and let the music, coming across the water, soft-like and beautiful, lull us to sleep.

I don’t know how long I had been asleep when I heard, as if in a dream, awful screams. I awoke, clutching Skinny, who was next to me, and we sat there, half dazed, listening.

Then it came again—the shrieking of women and cries for help.

CHAPTER XX

THE WRECK OF THE "POLLY JANE"

WHEN screams wake you up in the night that way out of a sound sleep and leave you there in the dark, trembling and wondering, they seem worse than in the daytime.

"Did you hear it, Pedro?" gasped Skinny.
"What was it?"

Then it came again. There could be no mistake this time. We were all wide awake, huddled together, hardly daring to breathe.

Someone struck a match. It made a flickering light for a moment, then went out, but during that moment I could see the faces of the boys and I knew that I was not the only one who was scared.

"Help, help!" it came again, louder than before. "We are drowning."

"Great snakes!" exclaimed Bill. "Somebody is in the lake. It sounds as if there were forty of them, all women."

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Outside, the fire was still smoldering. In the dimness I could see our bathing suits on a line, ready for use in the morning. Skinny saw them at the same time.

"Don't put on your clothes, fellers," he told us. "Get into your bathing suits. It's up to us to save those folks."

In less time than it takes to tell about it we had slipped into them and were making for the two boats on a run. Without a word we tumbled into them and shoved off, Skinny and Bill at the oars.

Across the water, from a point opposite the hotel, cries for help kept coming and the wailing of drowning women, or girls, and at the same time we could hear the people laughing and singing at the hotel. It is dreadful to hear the shrieks of the dying, mingled with music and laughter.

"They can't hear in the hotel," said Hank, "they are making so much noise. It all depends on us, and Mr. Norton hasn't come back yet."

Skinny pulled like a good fellow, stopping only to yell back over his shoulder to the drowning folks, as the boats shot through the water.

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"We are coming. Scouts to the rescue."

It was time that somebody was coming. When we drew near, we found that the old ferry-boat, the *Polly Jane*, had been wrecked and was half under water. Clinging to it and scared half to death, were the passengers, a lot of them.

A dozen hands grabbed frantically for the boat as we came up, and I was afraid that they would swamp us.

"Back away," I yelled, forgetting that Skinny was patrol leader and the one to give orders.

We pulled back out of reach and then another wail went up, for they thought that we were going to leave them.

"Gee-whilikins!" exclaimed Skinny. "One, two, four, ten, sixteen of them, and not a man in the bunch. We are up against the real thing."

Then he turned to the girls. "We'll save every one of you if you will keep quiet and help," he told them, "but we can't do it if you don't help. If you touch the boats until we say the word, we'll go off and leave you."

We wouldn't have done it, of course, but we had

to make them understand, and when folks are scared they don't know much.

"Is there anybody who can't hang on?"

"I can't much longer," said one. "Somebody stepped on my hand."

"Fellers," shouted Skinny, in a hurry, "in with you, everyone except Bill."

There was a great splashing; the boats rocked until they dipped water, but Bill and Skinny held them as steady as they could. And there we were, paddling around in the middle of the lake, in the dark, with sixteen scared girls clinging to the timbers of the wreck.

In a moment the boats were pulled alongside and we commenced the work of rescue. It was fun after we became used to it and Skinny was having more fun than anybody. He had hated to go back to Bob's Hill without saving somebody from drowning and here were two apiece.

"Gee, fellers," said he, "we didn't bring the rope, but never mind; we'll do the trick, just the same."

The first one we took off was the girl who said

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she couldn't hang on much longer. Skinny pulled up close and two of us helped her climb in while the other Scouts hung on to the sides of the boats to hold them steady.

One after another, in the same way, we helped the others into the boats, until both were filled, four in each, besides Skinny and Bill.

"We'll have to come back for the rest," said Skinny. "Can you hang on? It won't take long."

Those who had to wait said that they could.

"How about it, Pedro?" asked Bill. "Are you Scouts all right?"

"We'll hang on somewhere and get a rest," I told him.

Still from the hotel came the sound of music and laughing. It made Bill mad. He dropped the oars for a moment, braced himself, and—

Say, maybe you never heard Bill do his best. The time at the marshmallow party wasn't anything by the side of it. He made more noise than the whole sixteen girls put together. His yells floated out over the lake, until they seemed to fill

all the air. It was awful, and in the dim light I could see the girls on the wreck look at one another in wonder. Bill ended with a caw; then took up the oars and started for the shore.

"I guess that will hold them for a while," he said.

It did, too. The music stopped at once and, instead of laughter, came the sound of anxious voices, as people rushed out of the hotel to find out what terrible thing had happened. Soon we could see the light of a lantern go bobbing down to the shore and stop there, and we knew that Raven Patrol was landing its first load of shipwrecked passengers.

Almost before we knew it, Skinny and Bill were back for another load and we helped the girls in the same way as before.

"We'll have to make another trip to get you fellers," Skinny told us, when they were ready to start.

"Trip nothin'," said Hank. "You don't have to make any trip for us. We'll swim in."

"Where is Benny?" asked Skinny. "Oh,

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there you are. Here, Benny, climb in the boat and row. I'm going to swim with the bunch."

Then Benny forgot all about Scout law, which says that Scouts must obey their officers.

"I won't do it," said he, "and you can't make me. I'm no baby, I guess, even if I am littler than you. You are a better rower than I am, anyhow."

He started for the shore as he spoke, we after him, and there wasn't anything for Bill and Skinny to do but follow with the boats. They could have passed us easily, of course, but they kept near to be ready if anything should happen.

It wasn't so very far to shore, but I thought I never should get there. We had been swimming around so much that I was nearly all in and I noticed that Benny was getting wobbly.

"Let's practice life-saving, Benny," I said. "Put one hand on my shoulder. I want to see if I can do it."

"You do it fine," he told me as, side by side, with Benny resting one hand on me and swimming with the other, we made our way to the shore.

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Just the same, I was glad when we could touch bottom.

I guess all the folks in the hotel were there to meet us and they gave a cheer when we landed. The girls were starting up to the hotel to be rubbed and put to bed while their clothes were drying, when a woman broke through the crowd.

"Where's Ed?" she cried. "I don't see Ed."

"My God!" said one of them. "We forgot the ferryman."

There wasn't a sound for a moment and it turned me cold to think about it, for Ed hadn't been in sight when we first reached the wreck. We had been too excited even to wonder why the girls were there alone. Then the woman gave a screech which I can hear now in my dreams sometimes.

"My boy! My boy!" was all that she could say, over and over again.

With another shriek, she made a rush for the lake, but a man grabbed her before she reached the water.

"There, there, Mrs. Benson," said he, trying

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to quiet her. "We'll take a boat and go after him. We'll save him."

"Save nothin'!" whispered Skinny to me. "He's been in the water half an hour already. They can't find him in the dark."

"We've got to try," said Bill, "and do our best. Come on, Skinny. You and I are freshest and we are the best swimmers."

They jumped into one of the boats and pushed off, while a couple of men took the other. Then Skinny called to me.

"Jump in, Pedro," he said. "We'll need you to do the rowing."

I rowed straight for the wreck, for it seemed to me that if we couldn't find him near there, we should not be able to find him at all before morning.

As the boat neared the wreck the boys kept calling, "Ed, Ed, where are you?" But we couldn't hear a sound. The chances were that he was at the bottom of the lake somewhere, and we knew it, but we hoped that he might be hanging to some floating plank, too weak, maybe, to get to shore.

"I don't understand it," said Bill. "Ed could

swim like a fish. I've seen him in the water a lot of times and so have you. It wouldn't have been any trick at all for him to have got to shore."

"Maybe it scared him when the ferry was wrecked," Skinny told him, "and he made for the other shore to get away."

"Who? Ed? Not much. Ed wasn't that kind, and you know it."

"Well, why didn't he swim in and get help? We had to come more than twice as far. Yes, three times."

"I don't know why, but you couldn't drown Ed, with these timbers within reach, any more than you could drown me, unless something kept him from swimming or yelling."

"That's so," I said. "I can't swim as well as Bill, but you couldn't drown me in this lake, unless I had a cramp or something."

"Then he must have been hurt," declared Skinny. "What could have hurt him? If he'd had cramps he would have yelled and we would have heard him. We didn't hear any man's voice yelling. He wasn't there when we came; that's a cinch."

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"I don't know what hurt him," Bill told him, "but whatever it was, it must have happened when the boat was wrecked, although I can't think what could have wrecked it. Maybe he got caught in the cable and was dragged under."

"Bill," said Skinny, "now you have said something. That is where we'll find him."

We had reached the half-sunken boat by that time, but, although we looked everywhere, Ed was not in sight.

"Hold her steady, Pedro, I am going to dive."

Bill jumped into the air as he spoke, turned and struck the water head first, and went down out of sight. Almost at the same instant Skinny dove out of the other end of the boat. I watched anxiously until they came up, Skinny first, gasping for breath.

"Nothin' doin'," he panted.

"He ain't caught in the cable," called Bill, as soon as he came up. "I found the end and it is all clear. It's broke."

"Did you get bottom?"

"You bet I did. It's all mud."

"I didn't," said Skinny, "but I went down a long way."

"How deep is it?"

"About fourteen feet, maybe sixteen. It is shallower here than anywhere else on the lake except near shore."

The boys rested a minute; then dove again and kept diving, until they were so tired that they couldn't get bottom.

"Hey, you fellers," shouted Skinny to the Scouts on shore. "Get busy and bring some rocks to help us go down."

It is easy to dive down deep when you carry a heavy stone. By that time the water was dotted with lanterns. It seemed as if every boat on the lake was out, joining in the search.

"Bill," said Skinny, when we were waiting for the stones, "maybe he's caught under the boat, or in the timbers somewhere. Let's try it again. You take that side and I'll try this."

Once more they went down. Skinny came up empty-handed and hung on to the boat, panting, while I watched for Bill. I thought that he never

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would come up and was getting ready to dive in after him, when I saw his head come above the water, close to the wreck. He caught hold of the timbers with one hand and was holding something with the other.

"I've got him," he said in a queer voice, as soon as he could speak. "He's a goner, I guess. His clothes were caught on a spike. I thought I never should get them loose."

We lifted the body into the boat and started for the shore, calling to the other boats as we went.

CHAPTER XXI

FIRST AID TO THE INJURED

BOY Scouts are taught all about how to save people from drowning and what to do when anybody gets hurt. You have to be able to do such things before you can become a Scout. There are twelve things which you have to do before you can get a first-class Scout badge. One of them is to swim fifty yards; another is to know how to give first aid to the injured. We set a man's broken leg once, when there wasn't any doctor around. When he came he said that we had done it fine.

The book says that you must know how to "demonstrate artificial respiration," which is a high-toned way of saying that you must know how to make a fellow breathe when he can't. We had practiced saving drowning people and bringing them back to life a lot of times, but we never had done the real thing.

"It isn't enough to be able to swim," Mr. Norton had told us. "Half the cases of drowning could be avoided if folks knew what to do to bring life back into the body of the drowned person and kept at it long enough."

That was what made Skinny so anxious to save somebody before going back to Bob's Hill.

"Row for all you are worth, Pedro," he told me. "Come over here, Bill. Help me hold him up and give the water a chance to run out of his lungs."

He put his fingers into Ed's mouth to make sure that his throat wasn't being stopped up by his tongue or anything; then they held him with his face down and his head lower than his body.

All the time I was rowing as hard as I could and it didn't take us long to reach the landing and lay the body down on the grass.

"His mother has gone off in a faint," I heard someone say, "and it's a mercy. We've got her in bed."

"Where is the nearest doctor?"

"Valparaiso. We have been trying to get one. I am afraid it will be an hour or more before we can get anybody out here."

"It won't make much difference, I guess. He's dead, anyhow, poor fellow."

"Maybe he is and maybe he isn't," Skinny told them, "and we ain't going to wait for any doctor. If you folks will stand back and give him air, we'll show you what Boy Scouts can do, but get a doctor here as soon as you can."

"Stoop down, one of you fellers," he said to us. "Let's get the water out of him. We can't wait for a barrel."

I got down on all fours and the boys laid Ed across me on his stomach, with his head hanging down almost to the ground. Skinny made sure that his tongue was all right, then they began to squeeze the body to force out the water.

After that had been done we laid him down on the grass, with his head on somebody's coat and his face down, like the book says, to keep his tongue from dropping back into the throat and shutting off the air. Then Skinny went to work.

When you are trying to bring a drowned person back to life you have to get air into his lungs. What he needs is air. As he can't breathe himself, you have to do it for him. The book calls it "artificial respiration," but it takes too long to say it.

Skinny knelt on the grass by the side of the body, placed his hands between the short ribs, then pressed down with the weight of his body long enough to count three. Then he lifted his weight long enough to count three. The first movement drove the air out of the lungs; the second made the chest larger and let the air in. He did that twelve or fifteen times a minute, like breathing, until he was tired. Then Bill took hold.

When Bill was tired, somebody else started in. We all took turns that way until every one of us had had a chance and Bill was hard at it for the second time. Still, we could see no signs of life.

"I guess he's a goner," said Bill in despair. "We've been at it almost an hour. Ain't the doctor here yet?"

"Good work, boys," we heard someone say just then. "Keep at it two hours, if necessary. Here, let me try."

It was Mr. Norton, and we never were more glad to see anybody in our lives. He had come back to camp and was chasing around trying to find out what had become of us.

"We'll try another method for a change," said he, turning Ed over on his back as he spoke. "Here, Bill, take this handkerchief and hold his tongue. That's right. Whew! The lad got an ugly bump on his head."

He knelt back of the body, took hold of Ed's arms above the elbows, and pulled them straight back until the hands touched the ground back of the head. He held them there, pulling steadily, long enough to count three; then carried the arms down again to the chest and pressed hard to force the air out. He did that about twelve times a minute and we could hear the air go in and out, just like breathing.

When Mr. Norton was tired, someone else took hold, and at last, when we were almost ready to

give up, Ed's eyelids flickered a little and we heard a faint sigh.

"He's coming, boys," shouted Mr. Norton, excitedly. "We are going to make it. Get a bed ready for him, somebody. Warm the sheets; fill some hot-water bottles."

In another minute Ed began to breathe a little, once in a while, without help. Whenever he'd stop, we would move his arms again and help him out. Then we rubbed his arms and legs toward his body, and his body toward the heart, to start the blood moving. When the doctor finally came, Ed was breathing without any help.

We couldn't understand at first how that old tub of a ferry-boat could have been wrecked, or how Ed could have been hurt. As soon as he was able to talk we found out about most of it and guessed the rest.

The *Polly Jane* was a rough sort of a boat which made trips back and forth, across the narrowest part of the lake, between the hotel and the landing opposite Lake View station, on the interurban railroad. It was only a platform, held up by empty barrels.

The ferryman pulled it across by means of a cable. Ed, the ferryman, was about twenty years old. We didn't know his last name, but he lived somewhere around there and had a job working for the hotel during the summer. The boat was made to carry only twelve, and with twelve on you had to balance it just right and stand still.

It seems that the "S. S. Club" of Valparaiso girls had come out to hold a picnic that afternoon. Nobody knew what "S. S." stood for; it was a secret. Someone told us that it meant Sweet Sixteen. Maybe it was Sunset Club. Anyhow, there were sixteen members and they stayed long after sunset, in order to try the new dance floor at the hotel.

They stayed so long that there was not time for the ferry to make two trips across the lake before the last car would leave and so the whole sixteen, talking and laughing, piled on to the boat at once. Under their weight, the platform went down almost even with the water.

Ed didn't want to take them at first.

"It isn't safe," said he. "There are too many

of you and this old cable is pretty near played out. We are going to put on a new one to-morrow."

Just then they heard the car whistling for Wahob Lake.

"We've just got to go, Ed," they told him. "Please take us. We can't stay here all night. We'll stand still and do exactly what you tell us."

Ed fixed them where they would balance the boat, told them not to move, and started. He might have taken them across all right if two of the empty casks hadn't begun to leak, but by the time the boat was halfway across the casks on one side had partly filled, letting that side of the platform down into the water.

When the water washed over the feet of the girls, they screamed and crowded over to the other side, forcing that side under. Then, badly scared, they crowded back again.

"Stand still," yelled the ferryman, as the water put out his lantern.

He was too late. As he pulled on the cable with all his strength, trying to get across somehow, it broke. Ed went over backward, striking his head

against a timber, and lay there, half in the water, unconscious, until the tipping of the platform rolled him off into the lake.

It was too dark for the passengers to see much of what was happening and they were too frightened to notice, if they could have seen. There was a panic for a few minutes. Those on the edges were crowded off into the water, where they splashed around, fighting in the dark for their lives and screaming for help in their fright.

They all managed to catch hold of the wreck somewhere and hold on until their shrieks and calls for help had been heard by Raven Patrol, sound asleep in our tents, and it didn't take us long to get there.

"Fellows," said Mr. Norton, solemn-like, after we had gone back to camp and were getting ready for bed, "you have saved a human life. I don't count the girls, although that was fine work and most helpful. Someone else might have heard them and gone to the rescue if you hadn't, but it seems probable that had it not been for my Scouts that young man would still be in Long Lake, and it seems

certain that but for your prompt work and your knowing how to resuscitate him he must have died. It pleases me to think of the joy unspeakable which fills the heart of that mother to-night, all because Raven Patrol made good."

"Betcher life we did," said Skinny, "but we ought to have had a rope. Fellers, you never ought to go out without a rope."

CHAPTER XXII

BACK TO BOB'S HILL

THAT was the real end of our great camping trip, for next day we were too busy packing up to have much fun.

“Anyhow,” laughed Mr. Norton, “you are going out in a blaze of glory, and that is something. It isn’t everybody who can save sixteen beautiful young women, all in one evening.”

“Huh!” said Skinny. “That wasn’t anything. It was easy. We could have saved a lot more just as well as not. Couldn’t we, fellers? When it comes to rescuing folks, leave it to us.”

We shipped all our things to Valparaiso on the six o’clock car and went along ourselves at the same time. Dick’s folks had asked us to take supper with them and spend the last night there.

The Rattlesnakes went with us as far as Lake View station and gave us a rousing send-off. At

Sheridan Beach we found Mrs. Laurence, Alice, and a bunch of Flint Lake girls, who waved their handkerchiefs and shouted good-by.

"Be sure to write to me," Alice called, just as the car started, but we didn't know which one she was saying it to.

"I'll tell you what," I said to the boys. "I am secretary and it is up to me to do the writing."

The boys set up a groan at that, and Skinny wanted us to understand that he was leader of the patrol and captain of the Band.

"I saw her first, anyhow," I told them. "I saw her that summer at Starved Rock. She was looking through the bushes when the tramp was trying to rob Hank of his pearl. I discovered her; that's what I did."

"Discovered nothin'!" put in Bill. "Discovering doesn't count with girls. You can discover the North Pole and things like that, but girls are different."

"Not always, I fear," laughed Mr. Norton, who had been taking it all in. "My own experience has

been that some girls are very similar to the North Pole."

"Guess what," said Benny. "Let Pedro write to her, if he wants to. 'Cause why? There can't anybody read his writin'."

"Mr. Chairman," shouted one of the boys, like we do when we hold meetings in our barn at home, or in the cave.

"The gentleman from Bob's Hill," said Skinny, swinging his hatchet, while all the passengers looked on in surprise, wondering what we were going to do.

"I move that we make the secretary do his writing to her in invisible ink, the kind we make out of lemon juice."

There wasn't any doubt about that vote. "The ayes have it," said Skinny, after the noise had stopped and he could make himself heard.

I did it, too, only I told Alice how to make the writing come out plain by holding the letter up to a fire. But that part doesn't belong in this history.

At last we climbed on the train and started for Bob's Hill, sorry to leave Dick behind but glad that

in another day we should see our folks, the cave, Peck's Falls, and the rest. It seemed as if we had been gone a year and as if things ought to look different.

We changed cars at Pittsfield, Saturday forenoon, and were less than twenty miles from home. The conductor came through the train with a telegram in his hand.

"Is there anybody in this bunch named Skinny Miller?" he asked.

"That's me," Skinny told him.

"Maybe somebody else wants to be rescued," said Bill.

Skinny didn't answer, but tore the envelope open in a hurry.

"It's from Jim," he shouted, after he had looked at it. "There is something going on. Read it out loud, Mr. Norton."

" 'Skinny Miller, Patrol Leader, Raven Patrol,' read Mr. Norton. 'Everybody get off at Maple Grove.

" 'JIM DONOVAN, Patrol Leader,

" 'Eagle Patrol.' "

Maple Grove is the first station south of Bob's Hill and only a mile away. We knew in a minute what the Eagles were up to. They were going to meet us there and march in. It made us all excited to think of it.

"I am wondering if you boys will care if I keep on the train until I get home," said Mr. Norton, after thinking a minute. "I don't like to desert the colors, and if it makes any difference to you I'll stick; but a very good friend of yours, Mrs. Norton by name, will be waiting for me at the station, and I do not like to disappoint her.

"We must have a meeting soon," he went on, after we had agreed to let him off, "and we must have your people there. They will want a report from me about how you fellows have behaved and I want to tell them how proud I am of these Boy Scouts of mine. I didn't watch you every minute. I often had to leave you and place you upon honor. I sometimes was worried about you but I never was ashamed of you. You made good every time. You have been true Scouts and that means that you were young gentlemen, brave and trustworthy."

As soon as we had left Cheshire behind, we began to get our things together, ready to leave the train, and we were standing at the door, waiting, long before it was time. We couldn't keep our eyes from the windows. Those mountains looked good to us.

"I could eat them," exclaimed Skinny, "I am that hungry."

"Mt. Moriah is good, what little there is of it," said Mr. Norton, "but look there."

He pointed out of the window, as he spoke, to the hills and mountains that had closed in on both sides of the little, narrow Hoosac valley. In some places there was room only for the railroad, the river, and a wagon road; in others, the valley broadened out a little, but the mountains were close all the way.

"Maple Grove!" called the brakeman.

Mr. Norton went with us to the platform of the car, in order to wave to the Eagles, and we were off almost before the train had stopped. The minute we came in sight on the platform we heard a great cheering and drumming. And there stood Jim

Donovan and the Gingham Ground Gang—I mean Eagle Patrol, in new Scout uniforms. They didn't look any more like the Gang which we used to fight with than anything.

There was great handshaking for a few minutes after the train moved away; then Jim formed us in line. In front he placed an Eagle Scout with a drum and Benny Wade, carrying the American flag. Then came Jim and Skinny, the two patrol leaders, looking proud and almost like generals; then Bill and the assistant patrol leader of the Eagles. After them the other Scouts, lined up in twos, an Eagle and a Raven side by side.

“Forward, march!” cried Jim.

“Rub-a-dub-dub!” went the drum.

Down the street we marched toward Bob's Hill, keeping step to the drum, with our hearts smiling and our faces shining with happiness. And all the way along folks came out of their houses to see us go by.

Believe me, there was some noise, after a few minutes, when old Greylock lifted his head above the hills and welcomed us. We turned up past the school,

so that we could march through the business street; then down Commercial Street, where the clerks and customers in the stores ran out to the sidewalk and people that we knew waved and called to us as we passed.

Just ahead was the bridge and the railroad crossing, with Park Street beyond. We could see Bob's Hill looming up; down the street a little way was our house; across and below, was Benny's.

Then, just as I was thinking that in another minute I should walk into the house and see my folks, the procession turned south again, along the railroad, walking in the pathway by the side of the track.

"What is going on?" I asked the Eagle who was marching with me.

He grinned and shook his head, pretending that he didn't know; but when we turned up a lane which I knew would take us into Plunkett's woods, I began to understand.

Soon we were in the midst of the woods and in a minute came out into an open space, with plenty of grass and shade and tables for picnickers. And

there were our folks, waiting to welcome us! And there were Mr. and Mrs. Norton and all kinds of things to eat!

“Break ranks!” yelled Jim.

But nobody heard him and nobody stopped to listen. We were too busy.

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THE END





